DAILY NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

THE TIMES

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M&S pulls it off again!

Great style for autumn

INSIDE TIMES2

Gen Z vs boomers
Who drinks the most?

Burnham lays blame on Brexit for UK's woes

PM won't rule out tax rises as borrowing soars

Steven Swinford Political Editor
Oliver Wright Policy Editor

Andy Burnham promised "substantial change" during his first Commons appearance as prime minister, despite warnings that rising inflation made higher taxes almost inevitable.

Burnham told MPs that "Britain is not where any of us would wish it to be" and that "things are not working as they should".

The prime minister said life was "too expensive and too hard for too many" as he pledged to overhaul the economy and "bring back hope".

However, he repeatedly declined to answer questions on whether he would raise taxes in his first budget on October 28 to try to balance the books.

Economists believe the war in the Middle East and rising cost of government borrowing have almost halved the government's £24 billion worth of fiscal headroom, which is a cushion against future events.

Burnham also needs to find extra money for defence and his pledges to ease the cost of living.

Oil prices increased further after the US launched fresh strikes against Iran in response to Tehran targeting US troops in the region and commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz.

The cost of government borrowing rose to the highest level in 18 years and traders believe it is increasingly likely that interest rates will rise.

The sell-off in gilts yesterday was also part of a wider global bond market sell-off affecting Japan, Germany, France and the US.

Burnham used his first appearance before MPs as prime minister to blame Britain's economic problems on the legacy of Margaret Thatcher, austerity and Brexit.

Setting out his "diagnosis", he said: "Political power was centralised, economic power privatised, the country deindustrialised. Austerity followed, hollowing out councils and depriving them of the agency to act to reverse any of this.

"And then Brexit compounded the damage, ushering in a decade of low growth and stalled regeneration.

"Change begins with honesty and I'm not hearing much of it this afternoon. Unless we are blunt about what went wrong, we won't turn things around."

He said that the government would be "relentless" in taking more public control of water and energy, and promised to oversee fundamental devolution from Whitehall.

He also signalled that he would find the money to increase defence spending to 3 per cent of GDP by 2030 at the next spending review, the equivalent of an extra £10 billion a year.

Burnham stressed that his appointment as chancellor of John Healey — who quit as defence secretary under Sir Keir Starmer over military funding — was made "precisely" on the basis of the arguments Healey used when resigning.

Tom Watts, a portfolio manager at Julius Baer, the private banking group, said that the rising cost of borrowing would make tax rises "difficult to avoid".

He said: "The recent surge in natural gas prices, and the resulting increase in gilt yields, is likely to leave John Healey with less fiscal headroom ahead of his

Continued on page 6

JACOPO RAULE/FILMMAGIC/GETTY IMAGES

Canal hoppers Amal and George Clooney arrive by boat in Venice for the city's 83rd film festival, where the actor will receive a lifetime achievement award

Nottingham families were not told about stalker danger

EXCLUSIVE

Fiona Hamilton Chief Reporter

Police failed to tell bereaved families of the Nottingham attacks that they were being stalked by a mentally ill man, then downplayed the risk he posed.

Families of the victims of the triple killer Valdo Calocane said it was "staggering" they were not told that another sectioned patient, who had been referred to the Prevent scheme and had a history of threatening behaviour, had a fixation with their case.

Barnaby Webber's parents were not told for 18 months that the man, who claimed he was aware of a "cover-up" in the high-profile case, had travelled to Somerset to try to find them.

He attended the GP surgery of Dr Sanjoy Kumar, whose daughter, Grace O'Malley-Kumar, was also killed.

When the man absconded from a mental health institution, there was a week-long delay in telling families. Even at that point, police said the man was not a threat because he was reaching out to "offer his help", but omitted that he had been referred to Prevent over extremism and had a history of threatening behaviour.

Nottinghamshire police have referred themselves to the Independent Office of Police Conduct (IOPC) over the incident, The Times has learnt. The police watchdog is already examining a myriad of failings in the case, including missed opportunities to arrest Calocane before the attacks in June 2023 in which he fatally stabbed Webber and O'Malley-Kumar, both 19-year-old students, and Ian Coates, 65, a school caretaker. A public inquiry into missed opportunities to stop Calocane, a paranoid schizophrenic who was sectioned four times, resumes this month.

Emma Webber, Webber's mother, said it was "profoundly upsetting" that police did not tell her that a mental health patient had travelled to Taunton and Bridgwater seeking to locate her family, particularly given that her son Charlie was at school in the area.

"To discover that we were left completely in the dark, without any safeguarding advice or guidance for our

Continued on page 5

IN THE NEWS

Trump targets EU

Britain is likely to be spared from a new salvo in President Trump's tariff war as he plans to target the European Union within weeks for fining big US tech companies. Page 2

'Ghoulish' heist bar

Jewellers have criticised a "ghoulish" plan to turn the site of the 2015 Hatton Garden heist into a robbery-themed bar, closing a jewellery shop above the vault. Page 14

Leipzig drone attack

Germany accused Moscow of mounting a drone attack last month on Leipzig airport and plans to retaliate by closing two Russian diplomatic institutions. Page 23

More London losses

The London stock market is set to lose another three companies after boards announced transactions in a wave of dealmaking worth more than $100 billion. Page 27

Fernández for City

The Argentinian midfielder Enzo Fernández was on the brink of a joint-British record transfer to Manchester City after agreeing to leave Chelsea for £125 million. Page 58

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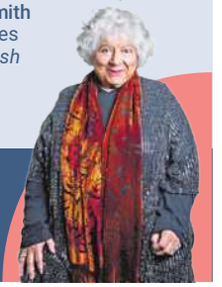
News

Today's highlights

7.05am **Sally Jameson**, Cabinet Office minister
8.45am **Sir David King**, former chief scientific adviser to the government
12pm *PMQs Unpacked* with The Times's chief political commentator, **Patrick Maguire**, and The Sunday Times's new political editor, **Ben Riley-Smith**
3.35pm **Miriam Margolyes**, right, discusses her new book, *Miriam's Full English*
4.05pm **Sulaiman and Kasim Khan**, sons of Imran Khan, the jailed former Pakistani PM



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TODAY'S EDITION

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New film examines tragic paradoxes of a rugby superstar
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Can the 'Burnham Bounce' survive reality?

Andy Burnham faced parliament yesterday having spent the summer projecting an optimistic vision of Britain's future. But how long can the good vibes last as the new prime minister faces the cold, hard realities of governing?

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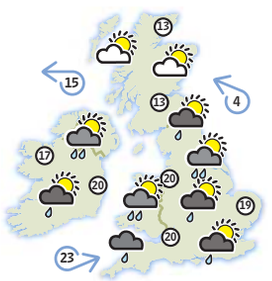

Largely dry and bright in northern Scotland. A risk of rain elsewhere.
Full forecast, page 47

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Britain is likely to be spared next round of Trump tariffs

Max Kendix Washington

Britain is likely to be spared from a new phase in President Trump's tariff war as he plans to target the European Union within weeks for fining Big Tech companies based in the US.

Trump has consistently threatened extra tariffs on the EU after a series of cases where tech giants based in the US have been fined hundreds of millions of euros under the EU's Digital Markets Act (DMA).

The Times understands that an investigation under section 301 of the Trade Act 1974, which allows the US to introduce tariffs for unfair trade practices, has been prepared for this month.

A Trump administration official said: "The timeline and countries are not decided, but they can expect it to cover more than the EU and to be initiated as soon as possible."

The UK also recently introduced rules which allow for large tech companies to be fined up to 10 per cent of global revenue under the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act (DMCCA). Several other countries have enacted similar laws, or are in the process of drawing them up.

However, senior sources involved in the section 301 discussions say that the UK is not on the list of countries subject to investigation — though the US will continue putting pressure on it to repeal the DMCCA.

In July, after the EU issued Google with a €890 million (£760 million) fine for anti-competitive practices, Trump said he would "immediately initiate a 301 Investigation into the practice of 'ROBBING' American Companies and, in turn, the American Taxpayer".

Although no such investigation was immediately launched, it prompted a renewed urgency from officials, who had previously been focused on replacing the blanket tariffs on all major economies which was struck down by the Supreme Court in February.

"The administration has been distracted for months by getting around the Supreme Court ruling," a source close to the discussions said. "Now that is done, they are turning their attention back to focused tariff goals, and digital policy is right at the top of that list."

Launching the Section 301 investigation would elicit a concrete timeline and a threatened tariff rate. The administration could decide at the end of the process to suspend imposing the extra tariffs while negotiations continue.

A similar investigation into the UK's taxes on tech companies, launched towards the end of the first Trump administration in 2020, is yet to result in tariffs being imposed.

A spokesman for the European Commission said the EU "has the sovereign right to regulate economic activities on its territory". However, they added: "Advancing co-operation on digital issues is a shared priority for both the EU and the United States and is firmly in our mutual interest. The digital economy is a key driver of growth, jobs and innovation, as well as transatlantic trade.

"The EU remains ready to engage openly, provide clarity and transparency on our respective digital regulatory approaches, and look forward to further strengthening the dialogue on bilateral and global digital opportunities and challenges in the months ahead."

A spokesman for the British government said: "The UK was the first country to secure a trade deal with the US, helping provide certainty for businesses and protect jobs across the country.

"Our deal has delivered real benefits for UK exporters ... There are no additional tariffs on UK exports as a result of recent US announcements."

US launches new wave of attacks on Iran

David Charter Washington

The US raised fears of a slide back into open war after it launched a renewed barrage of attacks on Iran with a warning from President Trump not to retaliate because "they will be hit again at a much harder and higher level".

Trump framed the latest round of strikes, which followed similar action on Monday, as retaliation after Iran attempted to lay mines in the Strait of Hormuz. In its own response, Tehran claimed it had launched a "decisive operation" against American targets in the region. Iranian media said: "US bases and interests are being targeted by missiles and drones."

It appeared to be part of a renewed tussle for control over the strait after the US established a channel in Omani territorial waters that enabled vessels to transit under cover of darkness.

"The United States is striking Iranian Targets near the Strait of Hormuz," Trump posted on his Truth Social site. He added: "If the failed Nation of Iran retaliates, they will be hit again at a much harder and higher level, but it will not be the biggest attack of them all, that is waiting in the wings and, when it is over, there will be very little left of the Islamic Republic of Iran!" Iran's state broadcaster said there were reports of explosions on Qeshm island, on the northern side of the strait. The state-linked agency Nour News said there were reports of explosions in the ports of Bandar Abbas and Chabahar. The state news agency IRNA also reported explosions in Jask and Sirik.

Last night the Financial Times reported that Russia was helping Iran to develop supersonic cruise missiles, which would be capable of threatening US naval vessels in the Middle East.

Time to be tough, leading article, page 21
Iran's economy in dire straits, page 24

Heat pumps held back by planning approval 'sludge'

Adam Vaughan Environment Editor

Campaigners have called for an overhaul of heat pump planning rules after finding consumers spent about £8 million on planning applications and sound tests despite the vast majority being approved.

Data from Britain's biggest energy supplier suggests that its heat pumps have become cheaper than running a gas boiler since the government ended VAT on electricity bills.

Nesta, an innovation charity, said that the planning system needed reform, describing it as a "sludge" that slowed down heat pump installations.

The charity found people in Britain spent up to £4 million on heat pump planning applications and up to £4 million on sound tests for the devices between January 2015 and March 2026. It looked at data for 14,202 applications from the websites of 265 authorities in England, Scotland and Wales.

Heat pumps are considered a permitted development for most properties, meaning the majority do not require planning permission for the devices. However, some properties, including listed buildings, are forced into the planning system.

Nesta's analysis found that homes requiring planning permission had an approval rate of 83 per cent. The charity said this suggested many should not have needed explicit approval in the first place. Just 7 per cent of applications were refused and 6 per cent withdrawn.

"For too many people the UK planning system still acts as a costly, complex and time-consuming barrier, or 'sludge', that deters widespread adoption of clean heat technologies," said Charlie Meyrick and Seth Caldwell at Nesta.

The government said: "We have already changed the rules so more households can install heat pumps without needing to submit a planning application, and we are exploring options to expand this further."

More than 100,000 heat pumps were sold last year. A new incentive for households is the prospect of using them for cooling as well as heating. The government is in the process of offering £2,500 grants for those models, known as air-to-air heat pumps.

One of Andy Burnham's first moves as prime minister — ending VAT on electricity bills but leaving 5 per cent VAT on gas bills — could make them more attractive too.

Force gets a £2m increase to fight crime

Sian Bradley

The government is providing £2 million for Cleveland police to build on existing operations and tackle serious organised crime in the area, the home secretary said.

Shabana Mahmood told the Commons: "I recognise how unnerving it will have been for law-abiding citizens, both in the affected areas and beyond to see a spate of incidents in close proximity and in quick succession.

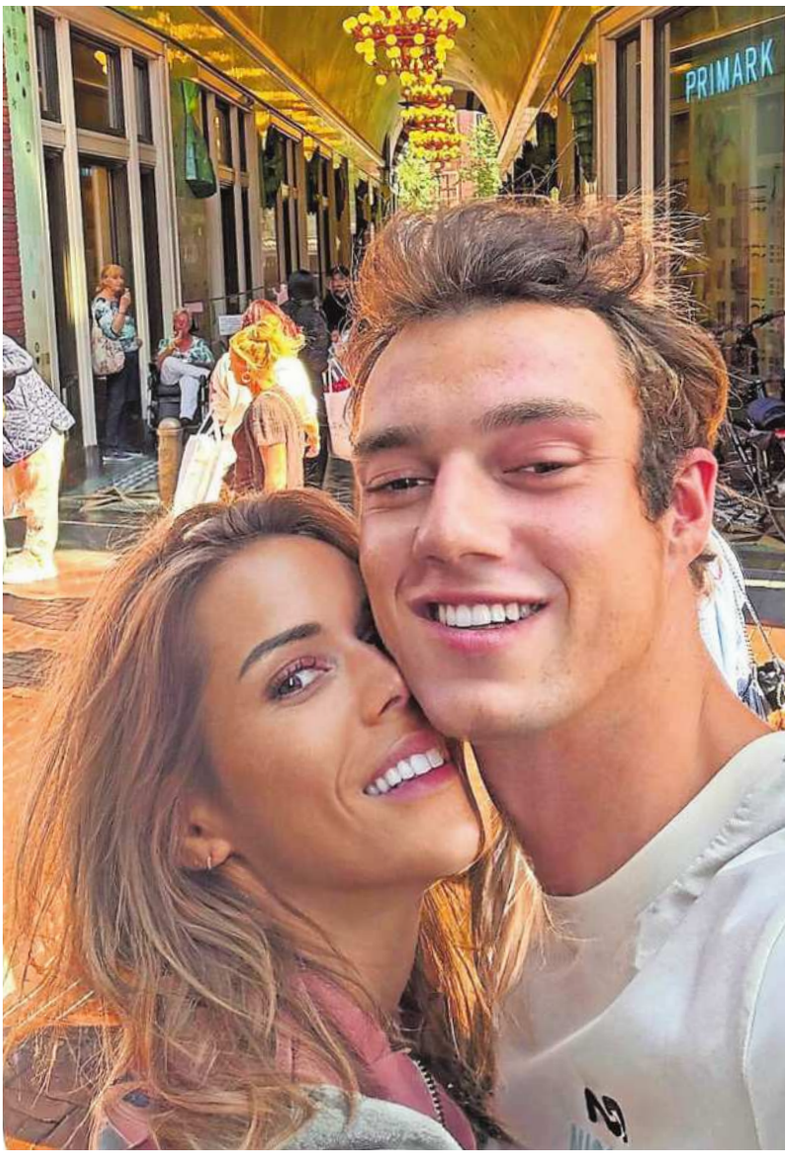
"Let me therefore assert once more, lawlessness of any kind will never be tolerated, and this government stands squarely behind the police as they face down criminality and disorder on our streets."

She said, on top of a "real term" increase for all forces, which takes Cleveland police's total funding to £197.8 million, an increase of around £7 million compared with 2025, and the deployment of extra officers to the area, the government is allocating £2 million to "tackle serious crime in the area".

The government has also indicated a wider review of the national police funding formula.

Brigitte's daughter finds her toy boy

Romance between 42-year-old and student has drawn comparisons to the Macrons, writes **Charles Bremner**



TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER RICHARD POHLE

Tiphaine Auzière, 42, and Antoine Lecomte, 22, left. Their relationship has been likened to that of Auzière's mother, Brigitte, and President Macron, above, who have 24 years between them

More than three decades since the teenage Emmanuel Macron fell for the married schoolteacher who would become his wife, her daughter has found romance with a student 20 years her junior.

Tiphaine Auzière, the 42-year-old daughter of Brigitte Macron, has gone public with her relationship with Antoine Lecomte, 22, a business school student from Lille, who is also a water-sports instructor.

The parallel with the age difference between the 48-year-old president and his 73-year-old wife is stirring media interest in the summer romance, which began in the seaside town of Le Touquet, when Auzière took lessons in eFoil electric surfboarding from Lecomte.

The Macron family have long had a holiday home at the Channel coast resort, where Auzière's law practice has an office.

On Sunday Auzière, the youngest of Mrs Macron's three children from her first marriage, posted on Instagram a video of a van trip to Amsterdam with Lecomte.

It shows the couple at play and sharing a room at the Faralda Hotel, an eccentric establishment built high in a former crane at a disused shipyard.

Lacomte, who attends the Neoma Business School in northern France, posted the video of the trip captioned "48h à Dam avec Madame".

Gala, a celebrity magazine, reported the relationship last month, saying Auzière had broken up in May with Cyril Hanouna, a controversial hard-right talk show host.

She had a year-long liaison with Hanouna after he recruited her as an occasional commentator.

Auzière is indifferent to people's opinions, Gala said. "With a 20-year age gap between them, the couple know that their relationship may cause a stir in Le Touquet and elsewhere, just as Brigitte and Emmanuel Macron's did in their day. But they don't care."

A friend of Auzière told the magazine: "Between them, it was an immediate click. They have a lot in common: a love of Le Touquet and thrill-seeking, as well as travel and entrepreneurship. Lecomte is developing a kitesurfing equipment company."

Another friend said: "Tiphaine is very much like her mother. Like Brigitte, she follows her heart and doesn't care what other people think. The only opinion that matters to her is that of her family."

Auzière, who has children aged 12 and 10 with a former partner, a Paris gastroenterologist, has spoken of her experiences as a schoolgirl when her mother, then aged 38, embarked on her relationship with Macron. He was a teenage pupil at the Providence Catholic school in Amiens where Mrs Macron taught drama.

"It forged my temperament and gave me strength," Auzière told The Sunday Times in 2024. "In any case, I never stopped to think about what people might say, so it hasn't changed my life. I've learnt to live with it and independently of it."

She had recently published her first novel, *Assizes*, about a young lawyer who defends a woman who kills her abusive husband.

Auzière is publicly defending her mother against online conspiracy theories that she was born a man and committed paedophile offences in her romance with Macron.

She told a Paris court last autumn that her mother's health had been damaged. Eight men and two women were given suspended sentences and fines after being convicted of online bullying.

Auzière, whose father, André-Louis Auzière, a banker, died in 2019, is expected to testify at the criminal libel case brought last year by the Macrons in the US state of Delaware against Candace Owens, a popular influencer who has spread the false claim in podcasts, videos and a book.

According to Owens, Mrs Macron and her husband belong to a "demonic" paedophile network that secretly runs the world. Owens has sought a dismissal of the case. A ruling is expected in the coming month.

After 22 years, King's 'hot equerry' is beating a rugged retreat

Lara Wildenberg

The King's bodyguard, dubbed the "hot equerry", has announced he is stepping down after 22 years of military service.

Lieutenant Colonel Jonny Thompson, 43, will leave the British Army and conclude his role within the royal household at the end of the calendar year.

After serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, Thompson has worked with the royals for the last seven years and as a senior equerry to the King and Queen — with responsibility for the King's public duties — for the last two. He plans to pursue a private sector career.

A spokesman for Buckingham Palace said: "Their Majesties were of course aware of this plan in advance and I know they are most grateful to Jonny for his support over the past seven years and wish him all the best for the future."

His many public appearances beside the royals — from Platinum Jubilee celebrations to American tours — have earned him an army of fans online, where social media users compliment his dashing looks.

Videos of Thompson in military dress or wearing a kilt have gone viral. His recent visit to the US caught the attention of Martha Stewart, the American television personality, who described him as "exceedingly handsome".

Thompson was born in Morpeth, Northumberland, and attended high school in the US state of Virginia, according to LinkedIn. He graduated from Aberystwyth University in 2004 with a degree in international politics and intelligence studies, before joining the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in 2005.

Lieutenant Colonel Jonny Thompson has amassed an army of fans

The following April, he was commissioned from Sandhurst into the Royal Regiment of Scotland. He served in Iraq and Afghanistan before commanding Balaklava Company, 5th Battalion, based in Edinburgh.

While in command, Thompson led the ceremonial and military support for Queen Elizabeth II's annual residence in Balmoral in 2018 and 2019.

He later recalled an invitation from the late Queen to Balmoral, telling the BBC in 2022: "One evening, myself and my wife, we were invited to one of the bothies on the estates to dine with Her Majesty.

"She straight away would start making the salad dressing, setting the table and the night culminated with me doing the washing-up alongside her, which is a lovely memory."

He said the Queen had an "ability to find commonality with anybody", adding: "Typically, during summer in Balmoral, the sovereign will host two ghillies balls. The ball consists of, naturally, Highland dancing, and there's every possibility that the soldiers could end up dancing with the Queen and, naturally, we have to prepare them for that so we don't look the fool.

"That personal interaction was something that provided a lot of nerves for the soldiers, a lot of excitement, but it's memories that they will take with them for the rest of their lives."

Thompson was appointed equerry to the Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall in 2019 before becoming the King's equerry when Charles was crowned in September 2022. He was then appointed a senior equerry to the King and the Queen in January 2024 and accompanied them on their tour to the US and on the monarch's subsequent solo visit to Bermuda earlier this year.

During the US trip, Stewart, who was present at the King's Trust gala in New York City, became his newest fan.

She later wrote on Instagram: "Can't believe I got this close to the 'hot equerry' Jonny Thompson, aide-de-camp to His Majesty, the King. We actually spoke while waiting for King Charles to get to us for a few words. Totally charming, completely cool, exceedingly handsome."

News

TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER JAMES GLOSSOP

Divine light Apprentice stonemason Ben McCormick examines the Rose Window at York Minster before a £1.4m project begins to reverse climate change damage

Summer beat heat record for fifth time this century, says Met Office

Ben Cooke Environment Correspondent

This summer was the warmest on record as well as one of the sunniest, the Met Office has confirmed.

The average mean temperature in the UK since June has been 16.5C, almost half a degree warmer than the previous record, 16.1C, set last year, according to provisional figures from the forecaster.

The Met Office said this summer's record-breaking heat had been "made 130 times more likely by climate change".

During a summer that brought five heatwaves and a peak temperature of 38.1C, at Kew Gardens on August 13, two thirds of England fell into drought and hosepipe bans were imposed upon almost 30 million households.

June and July were the second warmest yet recorded. The summer was also the sixth sunniest and third driest.

The Met Office weather station at Wisley in Surrey recorded 62 consecutive days without rain, while those at Heathrow airport and Odiham in Hampshire clocked up dry spells that lasted 56 days.

Mark McCarthy, the head of climate attribution at the Met Office, said: "The summer of 2026 has been remarkable and is an example of the extremes we can expect to see more frequently as a consequence of human-induced climate change."

The five warmest summers since records began in 1884 have all occurred this century — 2018 was the third warmest and 2006 and 2003 the fourth and fifth. The famously hot summer of 1976 was the seventh warmest.

The Met Office said that in the current climate, a summer like Britain had just experienced could be expected once every nine years. Previously, such a summer would have occurred once every 1,148 years.

In May the Climate Change Committee warned that Britain should prepare for 45C heatwaves by 2050.

Human activity is thought to have warmed the climate by an estimated 1.4C since the start of the industrial revolution and to be on course to have warmed it by about 2.7C by the end of the century, if carbon emissions are not cut more quickly.

James Pope, a Met Office climate scientist, said "summer 2026 would be around average for a UK summer in a world 2.5C to 3C warmer than the pre-industrial period. If emissions of greenhouse gases are reduced and global warming is limited to 2C, this summer would still be a very hot summer."

Crops across the country have been stunted by the heat, and this year's harvest is expected to be the smallest since records began in 1984.

Reservoir storage in England stands at 60 per cent, 18 percentage points below the average for this time of year, and the Environment Agency has classed the levels of nine major reservoirs as exceptionally low.

Fire and rescue services have responded to 1,132 wildfires this year, compared with 848 last year.

Responding to the Met Office's provisional figures, Katie White, the minister for climate transition, said: "Our hottest summer ever is a brutal reminder that we're not waiting for climate change to arrive in Britain, we're living in the middle of it.

"With kids too hot to sleep, families worrying about older relatives, farmers watching fields dry out, and firefighters and our armed forces battling wildfires, we've all woken up to a reality none of us wants for the people and places we love. That makes us more determined to act, with some of the biggest and boldest action in a generation to electrify our economy and tackle climate change with clean energy made in Britain."

Weather reports, page 47

Morning treatments may help cancer survival rates

Eleanor Hayward Health Editor

Giving cancer treatment in the morning rather than the afternoon could help improve survival chances, a study has found.

Researchers at the Christie NHS Foundation Trust in Manchester found that patients who received immunotherapy early in the day survived for nearly twice as long. They believe circadian rhythms, the body's internal clock, may influence how the immune system responds to treatment and attacks cancer cells. The study involved 2,631 patients treated with immunotherapy at the Christie between 2018 and 2023. They had various types of cancer including lung cancer, melanoma, kidney cancer and head and neck cancer.

On average they received the treatment — which is delivered as a drip every two to six weeks — at 12.49pm. The overall survival was 21.4 months for patients who received most treatments in the morning, as against 13.1 months for those receiving most treatments later in the day.

The researchers said that switching more treatment to the morning "could potentially improve outcomes without requiring a new drug, additional treatment or increased toxicity".

The findings, published in the British Journal of Cancer, are observational and cannot prove cause and effect. Paul Lorigan, consultant medical oncologist at the Christie and senior author of the study, added "we cannot conclude that timing alone is responsible".

The study builds on evidence that time of day can affect immune responses in areas from vaccination to cancer therapy. The body's internal biological clock regulates immune cell activity on a 24-hour cycle, with immune cells becoming more active early in the day to protect against potential infections.

Quintagram® No 2662

Solve all five concise clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Purloin, nick (5)

_ _ _ _ _

2 Rear of a vessel (5)

_ _ _ _ _

3 Compunction, penitence (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

4 Dry skin shed from the scalp (8)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

5 Secure type of rope fastening (4,4)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

A	A	D	D	E	E	E	E
E	E	F	F	F	G	K	L
N	N	N	O	R	R	R	R
R	S	S	T	T	T	T	U

Solutions see T2 MindGames p15
Cryptic clues T2 MindGames p14

Inheritance murderer

Alan Wotton, 83, was found guilty of stabbing his nephew, Andrew Avery, to death before setting fire to his own home after a row over inheritance. He was convicted following a trial at Portsmouth crown court of the murder in Gosport, Hampshire, in 2024. He previously pleaded guilty to arson with recklessness as to whether life is endangered.

Punk at 1976 prices

London's 100 Club will charge 1976 prices to celebrate the 50th anniversary of its Punk Special, when the venue hosted gigs by the Sex Pistols, the Clash and Siouxsie and the Banshees. Entry will be £1.50 on September 20 and 21, when the Manchester rockers Maruja and the Irish punk band Sprints will perform with special guests on each night.

Cellist's peak mission

The principal cellist at BBC Philharmonic is set to complete a three-year journey to climb 214 Wainwright peaks leaving a stone bearing his late wife's name, Clara, on each, after she died of cancer at 56 in March 2023. Peter Dixon is preparing to complete the Lake District challenge this week on Great Gable — the first mountain that the couple climbed together.

Bus stop turns up at last

Residents of Egginton, a village in Derbyshire, expressed surprise after a new bus stop appeared on the roadside despite operator Trentbarton withdrawing its service in 2017 because of low passenger numbers. The arrival of the new stop has renewed calls for transport infrastructure in the village, which has no shop, post office or GP surgery.

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Olympian: I feared attack as boatman 'lost his mind'

Charlotte Alt

An Olympic rower said he was frightened a boatman was going to ram him with his motorboat during an incident on the Thames.

Jack Beaumont, who won silver in the men's quadruple sculls at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021, said he tried to intervene after the owner of a motorised cruiser appeared to have collided with another rower on a stretch of the river near Maidenhead on Sunday morning.

A 67-year-old man was arrested and remained in custody yesterday.

Beaumont, 32, said: "I was afraid [when he came towards me] because there's not really anywhere to go on the river. I was worried he was going to really ram into me or something. It was frightening because he was so erratic, he was so volatile."

The former Olympic rower had been training when he saw the motorboat, which appeared to have been on the wrong side of the river according to the Thames's navigational rules.

Two oncoming single sculls from Maidenhead Rowing Club, which were on the same side, did not see the motorboat in time.

Beaumont said: "When you're rowing, you're going backwards so [the rowers] weren't expecting him and then at the last second they noticed. One of them managed to manoeuvre around him but the other one hit the boat. And then he just lost his mind.

"He started shouting at them. I can't remember what he was saying but it was very, very threatening. I was quite concerned because of the way he was speaking to them, I was quite afraid he might hurt them."

At this point the Olympian — who stepped back from professional rowing in 2015 after breaking his back during training before making a comeback the next year — told the rowers to write down the boat's name. Then the owner allegedly started shouting at him too.

Beaumont said: "I wanted him to leave [the other rowers] alone and let them get away from him. He drove over [to me] immediately just shouting and swearing at me, threatening me. It was totally unreasonable."

A video clip of the incident published by the Daily Mail appears to show the man telling Beaumont to "shut the f*** up" and: "I did nothing wrong. You f***ers think you own the water."

Beaumont said: "He then reversed his boat super quick towards me so I had to manoeuvre out of the way.

"He turned the boat around and just came straight at me so I had to sprint to get away."

He said the boatman stopped following him after some time and the rower continued his training. Beaumont, who has been with Maidenhead Rowing Club since he was nine, said he had never experienced an incident like this.

He said: "Normally we get on really well with all the neighbours and everyone else. I'm very glad I got him away from the other guys, I was just trying to defuse the situation."

The other two rowers who were involved in the incident have not been named and the rowing club declined to confirm their identities. The driver of the boat has also not been named.

Maidenhead Rowing Club said on Monday that it regarded what happened as a "serious and dangerous incident".

The club said its members had rowed on the stretch of river for 150 years and that the incident was worrying.

It added: "The safety of everyone on the water is our priority, and behaviour of this kind is entirely unacceptable. We will not tolerate any act that puts our members, or any other user of the river, at risk."

Thames Valley police said in a statement on Monday that at about 7.15am on Sunday a man "verbally abused rowers and drove a white-and-blue boat dangerously on the River Thames".

The statement added: "During the incident, the boat is reported to have made contact with a rowing boat and its occupant.

"The man then allegedly continued to verbally abuse a second rower, who repeatedly rowed away from the boat as it approached him.

"A 67-year-old man from Windsor has been arrested on suspicion of criminal damage, threats to kill, a Public Order Act offence, common assault, and using a watercraft in a manner that endangered a structure or individual.

"He remains in police custody at this time while the investigation continues."

PIER MARCO TACCA/GETTY IMAGES

Jack Beaumont, who won a silver medal at the Tokyo Olympics, intervened after an alleged collision between two rowers and a motorboat on the Thames, left

Pub landlady killed 'by a rough sleeper' in Germany

Herbie Russell

A popular British pub landlady allegedly stabbed to death by a homeless man at a German rail station was "impossible not to like", her friends said.

Rebecca Bullock, 31, died as a result of severe injuries after being stabbed at the station in Rosenheim, Bavaria, shortly before 1am on Sunday, Bavarian police said. She was travelling abroad to support a friend at a funeral.

Police, who are trying to establish a motive for the attack, said that she was taken to hospital where she died.

A 27-year-old homeless German citizen was arrested at the scene immediately afterwards. He appeared in court on suspicion of murder and has been moved to a secure psychiatric hospital.

People laid floral tributes outside The White Swan pub in Whitchurch, Bucks, where she worked. Richard Shuffill, 82, vice-chairman of the parish council in the village, told The Sun that Bullock had been "a breath of fresh air" since she took over the pub "a couple of years ago".

Rebecca Bullock, 31, was travelling to support a friend at a funeral

"It's the only pub in the village but she threw herself into her work to make it the centre of the community," he said.

"It was impossible not to like her. She was always pleasant and friendly. No one can believe what's happened and she will be terribly missed.

"Her death has come as a real shock and it's a huge loss to our community. I only saw her Saturday lunchtime and then 12 hours later — bless her — she is no longer with us."

Her social media posts show that she loved dogs and horses, enjoyed walking and ran the 2022 London marathon in aid of the Spinal Injuries Association.

Kirsty Hawkshaw, a friend of Bullock, said that the pub landlady had left the UK to support a friend at a funeral in Austria. "I cannot bear to say how she lost her life and we as a community are so angry and in absolute devastation," Hawkshaw wrote on Facebook.

The Foreign Office was approached for comment.

Families not told of stalker danger

Continued from page 1

family, workplaces or Charlie's school, while police officials were quietly circulating internal subject profiles and consulting legal teams, is both terrifying and deeply unacceptable," she said.

Kumar said he was "horrified to learn that [the patient] is known for violence, fixated on our case and seeking us out, yet we have not been given an official warning".

He noted the contrast of Calocane's family being offered protection and CCTV by police after the attacks over concerns about reprisals. "This is how the country treats victims, we are second-class citizens."

Coates's son James said "when it comes to the police I'm just not surprised any more".

In December 2024 the Church of England diocese in Exeter told police it had received a call from a man looking for information about Webber's parents. Police assessed him as low-risk before he was interviewed as a witness by the IOPC because he was making allegations of a cover-up.

The IOPC referred it back to Nottinghamshire police when the man said he had travelled to Somerset looking for Emma Webber and her husband, David, and that he had also visited Kumar's surgery.

The force's report identified a significant mental health history, repeated contact with police, a fixation on the Nottingham attacks and instances of threatening behaviour. The families were not given this information.

Last September the patient was sectioned and referred to Prevent after threatening ambulance staff in London. When he later absconded, police visited Kumar's surgery looking for him, but the Webbers were still given no information.

After a week the Webbers were told someone fixated on their case was on the run and later that he had been returned to hospital, where he remains. Neither family was told about his concerning past and the Webbers were still not informed of his trip to Somerset the previous year. It did not come to light until the summer, with the disclosure that the mental health patient had complained that the IOPC did not take his cover-up allegations seriously.

Nottinghamshire police, which referred themselves to the IOPC after Webber complained, said they could not comment during an investigation.

The IOPC has apologised for not informing families last year about its dealings with the man.

Post-mortem exam shows baby was stabbed to death

A newborn baby girl whose death sparked a murder investigation died from stab wounds, police have said.

Seven people were arrested after the infant was found dead in the Wincobank area of Sheffield on Sunday.

South Yorkshire police officers received reports of concern for the safety of a baby at 5.58am, and searched a property on Holywell Heights where the child was found.

Yesterday police said a post-mortem examination had found that she died as a result of stab wounds.

Seven people aged between 15 and 38 were arrested on suspicion of murder. Two of them, aged 26 and 37, have since been bailed. Yesterday a force spokesman said detectives had obtained a warrant to extend the time the remaining five people could be held in custody.

Detective Chief Inspector Tom Woodward said: "We recognise this is deeply distressing for those who would have loved to have a chance to love this baby girl, for the emergency services who responded and for the community who will inevitably be shocked by this incident ... Everyone involved in responding to this tragedy, from the first officers and paramedics on the scene to the detectives now leading the investigation, has felt the profound impact of this investigation.

"We will confront every difficult and distressing challenge and pursue every line of inquiry with determination and care to secure justice for her."

Burnham's debut Commons

Ben Clatworthy, Whitehall Editor
Geraldine Scott Assistant Political Editor

Andy Burnham used his first speech in the Commons as prime minister to present his diagnosis of the country's issues: deindustrialisation; the privatisation of the 1980s; and Brexit.

He said that he wanted to be "blunt" about what had gone wrong in recent decades and vowed to bring services and utilities into public control, boost devolution and "bring back hope" as a recipe for boosting economic growth.

He said: "Life is too expensive and too hard for too many ... What I bring back to the House after ten years away is a clear diagnosis of what has gone wrong."

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

Taking back public control over services and utilities would be at the centre of the government's efforts to create economic growth.

Burnham hit out at the "failed economic model" which he said had led to high streets across the country being left desolate, and described Britain's water industry as "a leaking monument to that approach, a country run in the private rather than public interest".

The model did not trickle down to local communities and allowed "wealth to be extracted and siphoned out".

Burnham said: "The government I lead will be relentless in giving people and places what they were promised ten years ago, ownership and control, and from that control over their destiny comes change and growth."

THE ECONOMY

"People are looking for much more substantial change" when it came to the biggest issues, including the economy and the cost of living crisis.

"That is what I will bring," he said. "Britain is not where any of us would wish it to be. Things are not working as they should. Life is too expensive and too hard for too many. This is why this government's first moves were to give businesses and people a little breathing space."

He pointed to the measures taken in the weeks after he took office, including cutting VAT on electricity bills, capping bus fares at £2 from next year and reducing business rates for pubs and live music venues.

Promising "the bedrock of our approach will be grounded in fiscal responsibility", Burnham hinted that he would take further steps to bring down the cost of energy bills. He told MPs: "When it comes to energy bills, I have acted already to bring in that cut on VAT on electricity bills. I recognise that it is just a start, but I hope that ... [people see] that as a sign of intent."

BREXIT

Burnham said the UK had taken a "series of wrong turns" since the 1980s, but Brexit "compounded the damage". He said: "Political power was centralised, economic power privatised, the country deindustrialised, austerity followed, hollowing out councils and depriving them of the agency to act to reverse any of this. And then Brexit compounded the damage, ushering in a decade of low growth and stalled regeneration."

He added: "Unless we are blunt about what went wrong, we won't turn things around. Far from taking back control, the combination of these policies took control out of the hands of communities up and down Britain."

DEFENCE

Burnham insisted that "defence of our nation will always be my first priority"

Boris Johnson's Brexit deal ushered in a decade of low growth, the PM said

and said the safety of the UK started in Ukraine. He was asked about reaching the Nato commitment of spending 3.5 per cent of GDP on defence by 2035 as well as the apparent softening on the desire to reach 3 per cent by 2030 by John Healey, the chancellor and former defence secretary.

He responded: "I appointed this chancellor of the exchequer precisely because of his commitment to the defence of our realm and the arguments he has made, and he will set out at the spending review the path to honouring our international commitments in full."

WELFARE

Burnham said that he "cannot defend a position where too many people in their twenties are on benefits".

He told the Commons: "I do not believe we have an education system that is setting all young people up for success. I think there is more we can do to give young people work-related opportunity at 16. I think there is more support we can provide them with mental health. Those are the approaches I think we can take."

WHITEHALL

No 10 North in Manchester was "set up with [a] full focus, the single front door on which regions can knock to get quicker joined-up decisions from Whitehall and through which power and resources will be passed to them".

He said: "Resources will include human resources. This is because a state which has grown too large at the national level now needs to redirect civil service capacity regionally and locally, repairing the damage of austerity and making the service of place the state's first priority."

SMALL BOATS

The Tories were wrong to suggest Labour had not made progress on small boats crossings, Burnham insisted. The "numbers arriving over the summer [has] halved on last year, making this year to date the lowest for crossings since 2021". He added: "Tomorrow, when I welcome President Macron to the UK on the occasion of the opening of the exhibition of the Bayeux Tapestry, I will thank him for the co-operation that has enabled us to prevent over 48,000 people crossing."

Despite accusations from Kemi Badenoch that Labour had not acted on small boats, he said: "Those listening at home will find it hard to accept what [Badenoch] said about the boat crossings that are significantly down, halved on last year, have nothing to do with anything this government has done."

Burnham added: "The home secretary and I, we will be relentless in making sure we continue to make progress. But it would, I think, do the party opposite well to recognise that significant progress has indeed been made."

PRISONS

Burnham said he believed the public backed his decision to release more than 2,000 prisoners serving indefinite sentences to free up space in jails.

Under the changes, all inmates who were sentenced under imprisonment for public protection (IPP) regime are to be released by 2029.

There are 2,271 prisoners serving IPP sentences, which were introduced by the Labour government in 2005 for criminals considered a significant danger to the public but whose offence did not merit a life sentence. The sentence was abolished by the coalition government in 2012.

The Conservatives have accused Burnham of avoiding one group of dangerous criminals being released early by "releasing a different group of dangerous prisoners". However, he said he was "finally grasping the nettle on an issue this House has ignored for too long". He added: "I believe the public will support me in recognising the clear difference between those who have served their time and more, and those who have not."

ELECTORAL REFORM

Burnham told MPs that he was "prepared to look at" an overhaul, including of the voting system. He has previously said that he would attempt to make the case for Labour to include electoral reform in its next manifesto.

He told MPs: "I am interested in political reform. I am interested in looking at how we restore trust in politics. I am prepared to look at all of those issues, alongside the voting system, too."

After saying he would "continue to look at" the issue of foreign donations in politics, he added: "I believe that this parliament does need to be a circuit breaker for this country. I do not believe we can carry on as we are — we are losing the trust and faith of the public."

DEVOLUTION

There could be a devolution deal for every part of England, with or without a mayor, the prime minister announced. Burnham said that he had asked No 10 North to start working with Cornwall council on a devolution deal "with or without an elected mayor" and extended the offer to other parts of the country.

"For a long time, the country did not have ambitions for its regions outside of London — it even talked of the managed decline of Liverpool," Burnham told the Commons.

"It took the devolution of power out of this place to allow our big city regions the ability to set new ambitions for themselves. Now, I want every single place across our regions and nations to be able to do the same, creating the conditions for good growth in every postcode."

LEASEHOLD REFORM

Burnham committed to bringing forward a Commonhold and Leasehold Bill in this parliamentary session, which would allow people to move from leasehold to commonhold home ownership.

He said: "I'm looking at every facet of the cost of living crisis and where people face unfair charges that they can't avoid, and this area of leasehold is absolutely in that territory."

He added: "It is my intention, the intention of the government, to bring forward that Commonhold and Leasehold Bill, so that finally we can reform this unfair system, and we will do that in this session."

Government cannot exist on good vibes alone, leading article, page 21
UK gilt yields highest since 2008, page 27

PM makes a stylish start, but substance is more of the same

Analysis

For neither the first nor the last time, Andy Burnham stood up and said his thing about the virtues of "politics done differently" (Patrick Maguire writes). As he made his first outing in the Commons as prime minister, it certainly was.

He strung consecutive sentences together in public. He sounded as if he meant them — as if he had read them before, indeed, as if he might even have written them himself. He gave direct answers to questions from the leader of the opposition. Most of them, anyway.

In fact, this was not so much politics done differently as politics done politically. It has been an awfully long time since Labour MPs ate up that old staple — so long there was an air of fascinated novelty in the chamber, as if they had walked into a fashionable nose-to-tail restaurant and discovered tripe might not have deserved its notoriety after all.

"We can," Burnham said, "bring back hope." For now, at least, that pleasant surprise is distracting MPs from what might otherwise be obvious.

The presentation's all different. But much of the substance, by Burnham's own admission, is more or less the same. Politics done differently, absolutely. Policy done differently? Hmm.

The prime minister cleared his throat with a lot of deference — probably undue deference — to his predecessor, who took the Chiltern Hundreds and his leave from politics for ever rather than pay the small courtesy of sitting through it. Early release of prisoners and defence spending excepted, meaningful points of divergence were hard to find. For Kemi Badenoch, that is precisely the point.

The leader of the Conservative Party thinks — and basically said — that this is a straight-up-and-down, old-school Labour government, just like the last one, only unburdened by the embarrassment that it is exactly the thing it walks and quacks like. On this, though, Burnham agrees with her, which is why this first exchange should raise expectations for a better quality of argument to come. Theirs is an honest disagreement, and a profound one.

Badenoch derided

the prime minister: "He's still complaining about Margaret Thatcher!" Unapologetic, Burnham complained again: "Let's have this argument here, in this

Brexit gets blame for UK's woes

Continued from page 1

first budget in late October. This could make tax rises increasingly difficult for Labour to avoid."

Paul Diggle, chief economist at the asset manager Aberdeen, told the Financial Times: "For Healey it seems a near-inevitability, as it has for several budgets, that tax rises are coming."

Kemi Badenoch, the Conservative leader, accused Burnham of "living in the past".

"The year is 2026 but the prime minister is still complaining about Margaret Thatcher," she said. "His ideas are all about more government control, more spending, more tax, more politicians.

"Conservatives want people to keep more of their own money. We want businesses to grow, to invest, to expand, and to create more jobs." She added: "He thinks if government spends more money, we will all get richer. That is not how this works."

Burnham was pressed by both Badenoch and Harriett Baldwin, the former chair of the Treasury select committee, to rule out tax rises in next month's budget but declined to do so.

Instead he insisted that he wanted to help businesses struggling with rising costs.

"I fully understand the pressure that businesses are under and the cost of doing business is higher than it should be, given the pressures of energy costs and other things as well," he said. "So I am not coming into this position in any way in denial about that."

Lord O'Neill of Gatley, a senior ally of Burnham, criticised the tenor of the prime minister's speech, telling LBC: "The tone of it about implying a lot more government spending to take control of X, Y, and Z, is the last thing investors want to hear. And so yes, they're like, 'Who's going to get real about the challenges of getting our debt down and controlling spending?'"

Healey's hypocrisy, letters, page 20

speech — the key takeaways

Burnham confers with John Healey, the chancellor, in the Commons yesterday

house!" Again being the operative word. He has been making a version of this speech since May: "problem-solving not point scoring", a nation lost after a "series of wrong turns" starting in Finchley, "stronger public control" of essential services, good growth driven by devolution. As he told me a fortnight ago, on a delayed train from Wolverhampton to London, he feels this diagnosis is coherent and correct. He admitted, too, that the prescription was still in its experimental phase. If it does not pass its trial, we could yet be reminded, by Badenoch, Nigel Farage or the Labour right's born-again believers in fiscal retrenchment that the 1980s took the course they did because most people wanted to follow Thatcher's economic directions.

Badenoch accused him of cynical prevarication: "Five different positions on early release in six weeks!" But on this stuff, Burnham might soon be in danger of sounding wearyingly consistent. There were little announcements here and there, such as a new devolution deal for Cornwall and the confirmation of Burnham's long-planned plan to announce a ten-year plan for the country. Badenoch's sharpest question, however, went unanswered.

She asked Burnham about tax. Too high, no? And don't you want to hike it even further? It was only a minute or so after he sat down for a second time, having offered a long and warm and lightly amused response, that it became clear he hadn't addressed it. But there was no outcry in the chamber — it's the way he tells 'em that's dangerous. His deputy, Louise Haigh, shook her head as Badenoch said the government's solution to every problem was to tax and spend. That was the closest we got to clarity on fiscal policy. When the same question recurred from the backbenches, Burnham ruled nothing in or out.

Still, he got through it all without disgrace. He gave little away — he was doing politics. The prime minister will remember, though, those lines of Philip Larkin's from *The Whitsun Weddings*: an arrow shower sent out of sight, somewhere becoming rain. Those questions on tax will come crashing down again in a few short weeks, with no possibility of cheery deferral. By then he will need a clear answer, and ideally an alternative.

Like a surprise choice of head boy addressing his first assembly

Tom Peck
Political Sketch

Britain's brand new prime minister waited in plain sight beside the Speaker's chair for an extremely long time, which is not really how these occasions are meant to work.

Andy Burnham, no longer king of merely the north, was supposed to sweep into a thunderous ovation from his adoring backbenchers. Instead, he just stood there, quietly listening while half of the preceding session, Foreign Office questions, came and went. His MPs looked to him and then to each other. When were they meant to do the cheering thing? Nobody seemed to know. While he carried on just standing there, Kemi Badenoch swept past him to a little ovation of her own.

Was he nervous? He didn't look nervous. To his right-hand side stood Wes Streeting, the self-appointed best man of the special day, who gave him a nerve-settling squeeze of the shoulder and an encouraging smile. The eyes were wide but the lips were thin. It was the kind of smile a few best men know they have to give, to convince a sceptical congregation that, whatever you may have heard, they definitely don't still fancy the bride.

Burnham waited right until the end to walk out to the government dispatch box, which meant his grand entrance was interrupted by several junior Foreign Office ministers rushing towards him, whom he had to swerve to avoid. As a man who fully intends to spend most of his premiership either alighting or disembarking at Euston station, perhaps this is just the way he likes it.

He arrived in a House of Commons that was all changed on both sides. The now ex-shadow chancellor, Mel Stride, sat high on the back benches, his sorrowful face looking like an anthropomorphised version of one of his own trademark, hyper-extended Shakespeare analogies. His replacement, Andrew Griffith, sat to Badenoch's right. As the prime minister stood up, Griffith pinched his chin between his thumb and forefinger, and did not un-pinch it for the next three hours.

And then the prime minister began. He'd promised to give a statement on "the economy and the cost of living", which was deliberately vague, and he very much kept it that way.

Tony Blair used to like to say that politics is mainly about performance and, as a performance, Burnham's was a touch over the top. The whole thing, from beginning to end, every phrase, every cadence, was dialled up to eleven. Whatever was said, it was said with a complete lack of tonal variation. He seemed like a surprise choice of head boy, addressing his first school assembly and trying to convince his unconvinced classmates that the headmaster hadn't got it wrong.

Kemi Badenoch asked some entirely fair questions

"What I bring back to the House after ten years away is a clear diagnosis of what has gone wrong," he said. "From the 1980s, this country took a series of wrong turns. Political power was centralised, economic power privatised. The country deindustrialised and austerity followed, hollowing out councils and depriving them of the agency to act."

Badenoch asked him some entirely fair questions, the main one being what he's going to do about raising defence spending, which his freshly appointed chancellor resigned over, back when he was defence secretary, and now, as chancellor, won't commit to doing. Burnham seemed to suggest he would commit to raising defence spending to 3 per cent of GDP by 2030, so where that leaves us, no one quite knows.

He became most passionate when he spoke of his planned education reforms, which, he claims, as most of the last five prime ministers have also claimed, will achieve parity between academic and technical education. "Michael Gove calls this bringing back stupid," he said. "In fact, it is bringing back hope."

His backbenchers loved that one. But Burnham is a genuine, lifelong, season ticket-holding supporter of Everton Football Club. He, like the vast majority of genuine football fans, is well qualified to know that hope and stupidity are not all that different. Why else would you take the job?

Starmer resigns as MP — and Greens spy an opportunity

Ben Clatworthy Whitehall Editor
Oliver Wright Policy Editor
Daisy Eastlake Political Reporter

Sir Keir Starmer is to stand down as an MP, triggering an early test of Andy Burnham's ability to win back former Labour voters from the Greens.

The former prime minister said it was time to "pass the baton" and focus on "other things" after leaving Downing Street.

He won a majority of 11,572 in his inner-London constituency of Holborn & St Pancras at the last election, but this was down from 27,763 in 2019.

The traditional Labour stronghold has been targeted by the Greens. The party's popularity has surged under the leadership of Zack Polanski, who capitalised on the public's disillusionment with Starmer's government.

In May's local elections, the Greens gained ten seats in the surrounding borough of Camden to bring their total there to 11, the most the party had yet won on the council and enough to make the Green and Progressive Alliance the official opposition to Labour.

Polanski has not ruled out putting himself forward as the Green candidate in the by-election to replace Starmer, and a party spokesperson said he had "always made it clear he would like to be a London MP".

The Greens could also attempt to do a deal with Andrew Feinstein, the Corbynite independent candidate who came second to Starmer in 2024.

Feinstein said yesterday that "all progressive forces" in the constituency should "unite in order to deliver an MP ... who is the antithesis of everything that Starmer stands for".

Labour will be hopeful of holding the seat after polling showed Green support had fallen significantly since Burnham became prime minister. In May the parties were almost level on about 16 per cent, but the most recent YouGov polling of 2,380 people on August 23-24 had Labour on 22 per cent and the Greens on 13 per cent.

In an effort to make it harder for Labour's opponents, the party looks set to fast-track the by-election. Applications to stand as Labour's candidate have already opened and a decision will be made by September 9.

David Miliband, the former foreign secretary who grew up in Starmer's constituency, will not seek selection, The Times understands. It has long been speculated in party circles that Miliband, who quit as an MP in 2013, would seek to return to the Commons by succeeding Starmer. However, it is understood that he intends to remain in New York, where he is president of the International Rescue Committee, a humanitarian charity.

Starmer told the Camden New Journal that he wanted to "pass the baton to a successor". He said it had been "a huge honour and privilege to represent the best constituency in the country", adding: "I will now focus on other things, and that will be international affairs, including defence, security, trade and technology in a fast-changing world.

"I will also continue, as I have done for a long time now with others, work on combating violence against women and girls; that is an issue that matters to me hugely. It's work I started before I became an MP and it's work I'm keen to continue after I'm an MP. So international affairs on the one hand, and continuing my work on violence against women and girls on the other."

Kemi Badenoch, the Conservative leader, said she was "surprised" to hear Starmer was standing down but could "understand why he would not want to spend time with the Labour MPs who treated him so badly after he won them their seats".

Labour will choose its candidate to replace Starmer next Wednesday in an accelerated selection timetable. Applications opened yesterday and will close at noon on Friday. The party will carry out its longlisting on Friday, while due-diligence checks will continue until Monday. Shortlisted candidates will be interviewed later that day.

One Labour source said before news of Starmer's departure that the former director of public prosecutions "never liked" Westminster and had no interest in remaining a backbench MP after being ejected from Downing Street. "He still feels bruised by the way in which he was forced out," the source said. "The last thing he wants is to have to see the people who orchestrated his downfall in the lobbies."

Count Binface, a satirist who often runs in elections and came second to Nigel Farage in last month's Clacton race, said on social media: "Can't get a moment's peace on this bloody planet."

Starmer praised his local constituency party, saying it had allowed him to turn Labour's fortunes around.

"I couldn't have asked for a better, more supportive constituency Labour Party," he said. "They have always had my back, and my constituency staff have worked tirelessly on casework and campaigns, and making sure that constituency concerns are picked up and dealt with efficiently."

Starmer said he had spent six and a half years on the front line, "from picking up the Labour Party in 2019 from the worst election result since 1935 and turning it around to a general election landslide victory in 2024 ... No leader has ever pulled such a swing across from such a low base to a landslide in the way that we did."

He added: "I'm proud of what we delivered. I've achieved it by being a locally based MP with a fantastically supportive [constituency Labour Party].

"Without them, it wouldn't be possible for me to step up and lead the Labour Party and then change the Labour Party to face the country and put it in a position to win the election."

MPs must look beyond local problems, James Kirkup, page 18

Final U-turn from former leader gives Labour another headache

Analysis

It is being described cruelly, but accurately, as Sir Keir Starmer's final political U-turn. Having insisted when he resigned as prime minister in July that he would remain as an MP until the next election, Starmer announced yesterday that he had changed his mind and would now step down immediately (Oliver Wright writes).

His decision presents an early headache for Andy Burnham because it will result in a by-election in Holborn & St Pancras and a test of his successor's electoral appeal beyond the northwest.

On paper the seat should be safe Labour territory. It has been a stronghold for the party since it was created in 1983, and at the last election Starmer had a majority of 11,000. However, this was down from 27,000 in 2019, despite Labour's landslide election victory, and the seat is now high up the Green Party's target list.

In May's local elections, the Greens gained ten seats in Camden to bring their total to 11, the most the party had yet won on the council and enough to make the Green and Progressive Alliance the official opposition to Labour.

Zack Polanski, the Green Party leader, is even considering putting himself forward as his party's candidate, which would increase the jeopardy for Labour. There is also the chance that some Starmer loyalists could stay away from the ballot box rather than back his usurper.

Yet Polanski, or any other Green candidate, will still face an uphill struggle to take the seat — not least because there are signs that the party's appeal is waning after Burnham's election and a string of controversies surrounding its leader in recent months.

Zack Polanski, the Green leader, is considering standing in Holborn & St Pancras

YouGov polling for The Times found that, shortly after the local elections in May, Labour and the Green were almost level pegging at about 16 per cent. However, since Burnham came to power the gap between the two parties has widened, with Labour now on 22 per cent and the Greens falling to 13 per cent.

The trend is particularly evident in London. At points during the spring and early summer, the Greens were either ahead of or on level pegging with Labour. Now Labour is firmly ahead at 31 per cent and the Greens are on 17 per cent — their lowest rating since September last year.

Much may end up depending on whether Andrew Feinstein, the Corbynite independent candidate who came second to Starmer in 2024, decides to stand again. He has called for progressives to "unite", and if he stood aside for Polanski — or the Greens stood aside for him — then Labour's notional majority would all be wiped out.

However, if the anti-Labour vote remained split then it would be hard to see how Feinstein or a Green candidate could win.

As for Starmer, he is unlikely to miss the Westminster bearpit, which he never liked even when he was in No 10. He is said to feel "bruised" by the manner of his ousting and had no interest in remaining a backbench MP. Of all his U-turns, it is perhaps the one for which he will have the least regret.

TIMES PHOTOGRAPHERS JACK HILL & JAMES GLOSSOP; KEVIN LAMARQUE/REUTERS; SIMON DAWSON

Sir Keir Starmer with his wife, Victoria, left, at the Labour Party conference in Liverpool, where a protester covered him in glitter, below; with President Trump, who holds a letter from King Charles, in the Oval Office, above; and at Welland Academy in Peterborough, where he met children who benefited from the free school meals initiative, bottom

'Perma-crisis' in prisons will take a decade to resolve

Matt Dathan Home Affairs Editor

The justice secretary has warned it will take ten years to put prisons on a sustainable footing to stop the "perma-crisis" of running out of space.

Alex Norris apologised for the uncertainty caused by Labour's chaotic handling of the new early release scheme, which will allow prisoners to be freed after serving a third of their sentence.

In a statement to MPs in the Commons yesterday, Norris said he had "pushed the system to its limits", but added: "At the same time, my duty is to ensure that we always have space to lock up offenders."

He announced further measures to free up space in jails, including a proposal to keep 18-year-olds in young offender institutions until days before their 19th birthday, before they were transferred to adult jails.

From early next year, foreign criminals will start being deported immediately after their sentence, which means many will not face any time in custody because there is no guarantee they will be imprisoned in their home country.

Norris assured MPs this would not apply to foreign criminals convicted of murder, terrorism, rape, child sex offences, grooming and manslaughter, who would continue to be locked up and required to serve the majority of their sentence in British jails.

These are the same exemptions that he and the prime minister announced for Labour's new early release scheme that is coming into effect next month.

Government sources said internal Ministry of Justice modelling showed the changes to the scheme announced by Andy Burnham on Sunday would push prison places "to the brink" within months. An additional 1,400 prisoners will remain behind bars over the next year as a result of the new exclusions. This will put prisons in danger of running out of space by May, according to ministry data, although the department said its plan to convert existing space in jails into cells would create an extra 600 cells by the end of this year.

Norris told Times Radio: "We need to bust out of this perma-crisis. We're making very important changes this month through the Sentencing Act. That will mean that we are easing pressure on our estate in the immediate term and in months and years ahead."

Asked by LBC how long it would take to build enough capacity to ensure there is sufficient to stop the overcrowding crisis for good, Norris said: "The prime minister has been very clear that he wants ten-year solutions. I'm working on a goal that gets us to sustainable prison capacity ten years into the future."

However, Claire Waxman, the victims' commissioner, said she could not reassure victims that they would be safe when the new early release scheme began next month. She said the government should have declared a national emergency and called a meeting of the emergency Cobra committee to address the crisis in prisons.

The first 700 prisoners to qualify from the scheme will be released on October 1 after serving as little as a third of their sentence under the new "earned progression model" that will allow inmates to earn their freedom through good behaviour while those who break prison rules will be punished by having to serve longer.

Norris said that victims will be given their say on what licence conditions they want imposed as they begin getting letters updating them on when they can expect their perpetrators to be released. The Times can reveal that Norris has committed to creating a new "challenge group" made up of leading victims' campaigners who will test future prison release changes.

Thousands of victims received letters in June informing them their perpetrator could be freed as little as a third of the way through their sentence but have faced weeks of uncertainty after Burnham paused the scheme.

Another key measure announced by the government to free up space is plans to free inmates who were sentenced under the controversial imprisonment for public protection (IPP) regime by 2029. There are 2,271 prisoners serving IPPs, which were introduced by the Labour government in 2005 for criminals considered a significant danger to the public but whose offence did not merit a life sentence. IPPs were abolished by the coalition government in 2012.

PM asked to help parents with costs

Sanchez Manning
Social Affairs Correspondent

A group of nearly 50 charities, unions and academics have called on Andy Burnham to overhaul parental leave to make it financially viable to have a family in Britain.

The demand was made in a letter signed by 48 organisations and sent to the prime minister today. Among the signatories are the Fawcett Society, a feminist campaign group, Movember, a men's health charity, the TUC, Unite, Unison and Save the Children.

The letter says Britain has the least generous parental leave system in Europe, with the worst provisions for paternity leave. Many fathers cannot afford to take leave under the current entitlement of two weeks paid at a maximum of £194 per week, the letter states. It points to findings from a report last year by the charity Maternity Action that 55 per cent of women on maternity leave say they borrowed money to cover their living costs.

A study this year by the Resolution Foundation, a think tank, found that a third of millennial women born between 1989 and 1990 cited affordability as a reason for delaying motherhood. Data from the Office for National Statistics revealed last year that the fertility rate in England and Wales had fallen to 1.39 children per woman, the lowest level on record.

The Labour government has already committed to a review of parental leave, which began in July 2025.

The letter urged Burnham to reform a system that leaves parents with an "impossible choice" of taking time to care for their family or keep earning enough money to support it.

"This is not just a question of how we support families in the first year of a child's life," the signatories to the letter write. "It is about what kind of society and economy we want to build."

'Dock benefits for antisocial actions'

Matt Dathan Home Affairs Editor

Parents should be docked benefits if their children repeatedly carry out antisocial behaviour, a report has recommended.

The Centre for Social Justice, a think tank, also suggested terminating social housing tenancies where families persistently terrorise their neighbours.

The report follows a year-long study that found nearly 21 million people experienced or witnessed antisocial behaviour last year, with two incidents reported to police every minute. This represents 41 per cent of the public and is up from 35 per cent the previous year.

The CSJ report on lawlessness on Britain's high streets warned that years of failing to confront antisocial behaviour, shoplifting and criminal businesses had created "consequence-free zones" in which more serious organised crime had taken root.

The Home Office said it would "carefully consider" the recommendations. Shabana Mahmood, the home secretary, said: "Criminal gangs have blighted our high streets and undercut honest businesses for too long. This report shows the scale of the challenge we face in restoring them."

Vehicle-related antisocial behaviour was the most commonly experienced form of disorder last year and affected 15 per cent of the public, according to the report.

It found that penalties for persistent antisocial behaviour were applied inconsistently across the country, which had created a "postcode lottery" in which many prolific offenders faced few meaningful consequences.

Policing sources told the inquiry that criminal behaviour orders (CBOs) were among the most effective sanctions for tackling persistent offenders of antisocial behavoiur. They are imposed after a criminal conviction and allow courts to ban offenders from particular places or activities.

However, their use varies greatly across the country. In 2024, courts in Greater Manchester issued 17 times as many CBOs as those in Thames Valley.

The CSJ has recommended a series of proposals to tackle the soaring level of antisocial behaviour. It has suggested that social landlords should be able to seek possession when a tenant or member of their household, including a child, persistently commits antisocial behaviour in the local authority area.

Iain Duncan Smith, chairman of the CSJ, said: "We are seeing the broken-windows effect play out on our high streets, as lawlessness and disorder is now allowing organised crime to take root. But the truth is that antisocial behaviour is far from 'low level' crime. It causes misery and ruins lives."

Duncan Smith added: "I have seen locally what can be achieved when the police, retailers and wider community work together to restore order, including by tackling the scourge of shoplifting ... I urge ministers to take this report and its proposals seriously."

News

Congressman: Andrew committed sex crimes

Josie Ensor Chief US Reporter

A member of Congress has alleged in a speech on the floor of the US House that Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor "committed sex crimes in the US".

Thomas Massie, a Republican representative from Kentucky, named more than a dozen people he alleged were Jeffrey Epstein's "co-conspirators" or associates. "We want perpetrators of these crimes to be investigated and prosecuted," Massie said, naming 14 people including Jes Staley, the former Barclays chief executive; David Copperfield, the magician; and Thomas Pritzker, the former executive chairman of Hyatt Hotels Corporation — before adding, "and Prince Andrew, who committed sex crimes in the US". All deny any wrongdoing.

Massie delivered the minute-long speech in the House as he led an effort to pass legislation to have three million more files related to Epstein released by the Trump administration.

The Department of Justice (DoJ) was forced to release a tranche of documents related to its investigation into Epstein after Massie helped pass the Epstein Transparency Act last year.

"Perhaps hearing these names will shame the Department of Justice into delivering justice," said Massie, who lost his bid for re-election in May.

Massie has begun a petition to force a vote on a second Epstein Files Transparency Act, which he said would give "state [attorneys-general] access to Epstein files required to prosecute perpetrators under state law, and makes it easier for survivors to ... get their files".

The Speech or Debate Clause in America's constitution gives members of Congress protection for statements made as part of legislative proceedings, allowing Massie to name people he accused of being Epstein co-conspirators without facing a defamation case.

It was not immediately clear what alleged crimes Massie was referring to in relation to Mountbatten-Windsor and his office did not respond to a request for comment from The Times.

Mountbatten-Windsor has never been charged with a crime in the US. He has, however, been accused in US court of sexually abusing Virginia Giuffre when she was 17. The former duke denied the allegations, and the civil case was settled without an admission of liability.

Giuffre alleged in a federal lawsuit that Mountbatten-Windsor abused her in 2001 and 2002, including encounters in New York and at Epstein's Manhattan townhouse, as well as in London.

In a statement, Giuffre's family said that they "commended" Massie's speech. "Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor should be investigated for his sexual crimes committed on US soil, not only against our sister Virginia Roberts Giuffre, but also against others of whom we are aware," said her brothers, Sky Roberts and Daniel Wilson, and her sisters-in-law Amanda and Lanette.

"Many of the crimes committed by Jeffrey Epstein and his collaborators remain in the three million-plus documents ... being illegally held by the DoJ ... It is time for them to be made public."

The former Duke of York was arrested by Thames Valley police on allegations of misconduct in a public office after allegations that he shared sensitive information with Epstein during his time as the UK's trade envoy. British police officers are planning to visit the US to speak to the Roberts family.

Harry quits in royal tussle for Africa

Jane Flanagan Africa Correspondent

Of the many things the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Sussex squabbled over, it was Africa that almost brought them to blows.

In his autobiography, *Spare*, Prince Harry recounts a row erupting in front of friends over who should champion Africa. When one asked why they could not both do so, William, according to Harry, "had a fit" and declared: "Because rhinos, elephants, that's mine!"

Harry's account is that his elder brother saw Africa as his by right of birth. "Africa was his thing," he said. "And he had the right to say this, or felt he did, because he was the heir."

This month Harry will step down from his last African charity, African Parks, a multimillion-dollar organisation whose rangers were found to have committed human rights abuses against indigenous people in the Republic of the Congo. William remains the royal patron of Tusk and founder of United for Wildlife.

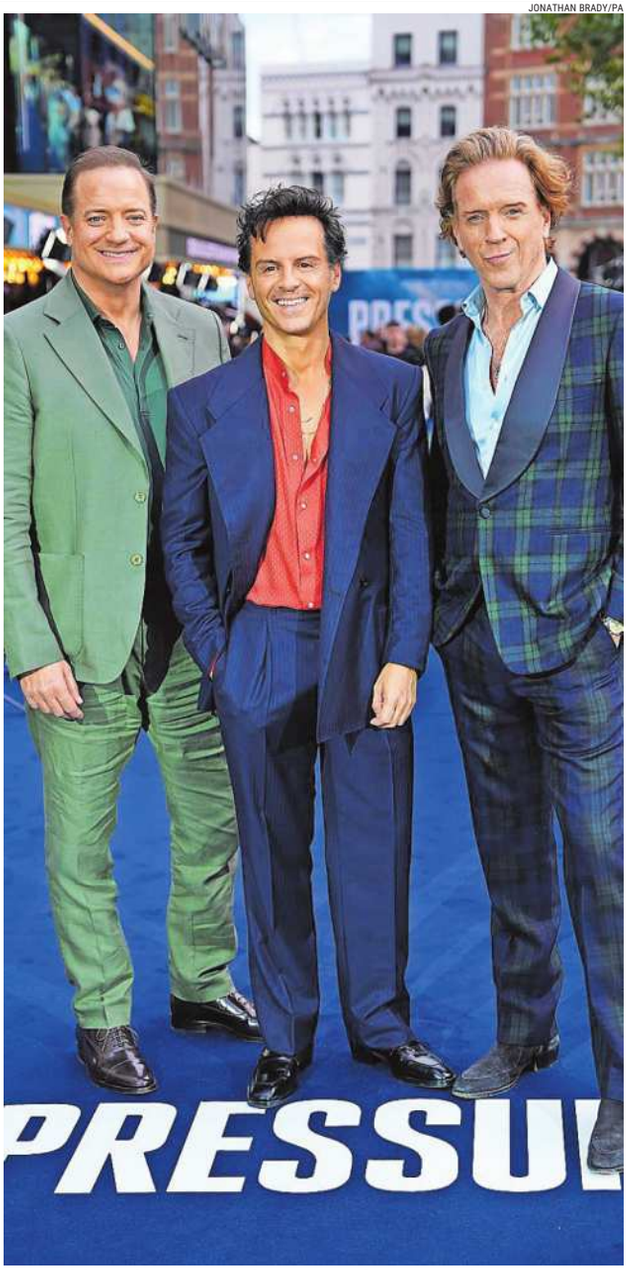
The two princes with a rock python during a visit to Botswana in 2010

The fact there was a royal scramble for Africa has troubled many working in the field. "Africa is nobody's conservation playground, and African wildlife belongs to neither a British prince nor an international NGO," said Adams Cassinga, a Congolese conservationist and founder of Conserv Congo.

"Rhinos, elephants, bonobos, lions and our forests are part of the natural heritage of African nations and, most importantly, of the communities that have lived alongside them for generations."

Cassinga acknowledged the importance of international funding, but added: "The conservation movement of the future should not be about influential people deciding which part of Africa they will save. It should be about asking African conservationists and communities, 'What future do you want for your natural heritage, and how can we stand beside you?'"

JONATHAN BRADY/PA



Buttoned down **The actors Brendan Fraser, Andrew Scott and Damian Lewis at the European premiere of Pressure in Leicester Square, London. The film tells the true story of a Scottish meteorologist's role in planning the D-Day landings**

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Bulldozers come for historic game

David Brown Chief News Correspondent

For more than 350 years residents of Ashbourne have rampaged through the town in a chaotic two-day game known as Royal Shrovetide Football.

The Up'Ards (born north of Henmore Brook) play the Down'Ards (born south of the river) every Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday.

Now organisers fear proposals to build up to 250 homes on fields traditionally used by players could undermine the future of the game in the Derbyshire town.

The game, which originated in 1667 but has roots in the 12th century, is played throughout the town with no conventional pitch, fixed boundary or set playing area. Plays starts each day at 2pm and continues until 10pm.

The action spills through the streets, fields and waterways as thousands of players and spectators follow the ball. The goals are three miles apart at each end of the town: at Sturston Mill and Clifton Mill.

Developers have submitted planning applications for two separate schemes for 250 and 175 homes on 35 acres of pastoral farmland off the Green Road, close to the Sturston Mill goal.

Steve Jones, secretary of the Ashbourne Royal Shrovetide Football Committee, has written to the local council opposing the development, claiming that it could cause "significant harm to Ashbourne's most important cultural and economic assets".

He described the match as a "nationally recognised and publicised event which is central to the town's historic identity" and "an important historic relic of a sport which was once played across England".

Jones said the closeness of the proposed development to the Sturston Mill goal "would obstruct a large proportion of the gameplay area".

He also claimed that a planned drainage system at the southern site could "be a deep, steep-sided and muddy pit [that] will cause injury and impede the game".

He added: "This would fundamentally undermine the continued operation of the game in its historic form and is likely to impact the success and attraction of the game.

"Consequently, the proposed development would not only provide significant harm to this unique cultural asset within Ashbourne, but it would also cause direct economic damage to the town through knock-on effects to the local economy and local tourism."

The hand-painted ball is made in the town from stout cowhide leather, hand-stitched with seven-cord hemp and filled with shavings of cork, according to Ashbourne town council. It notes: "The ball, although weighty, will float in the river but stout shoes are recommended if one decides to kick it in play."

PETER MACDIARMID/GETTY IMAGES

The Royal Shrovetide Football has drawn hundreds of players and spectators every year for centuries, left, but the playing fields, below, are marked for housing

Brett O'Connell has organised a petition, signed by more than 670 people, warning that the housing plans pose an "irreversible threat" to Ashbourne's heritage. He said the development "cuts straight across where the Royal Shrovetide game goes".

O'Connell told the BBC: "We feel it would become an issue and the developers are aware of this by keeping a portion as open space. But the game doesn't stick to planned routes so I think there'll be quite a few people if they move in, they'll be quite shocked about what happens on the day."

The developer, Hallam Land Management, has defended the proposals, arguing that the scheme would provide a substantial number of new homes in a sustainable location.

A spokesman said: "The framework for development that these proposals establish will achieve a locally distinctive design with high quality placemaking principles at its heart, delivering a sensitively designed residential addition to Ashbourne. This statement demonstrates that the various constraints and opportunities of the site have been carefully considered."

Derbyshire Dales district council will now consider the planning application.

The Up'Ards won this year's two-day match 3-0.

Lipman calls Israel-row actor 'coward'

George Odling

Dame Maureen Lipman has called on an actor who withdrew from a play she was involved in to stop being "so cowardly" and speak to her directly.

The veteran actress said that Gerard McCarthy made no attempt to contact her before announcing that he was withdrawing from the production over Lipman's views on Israel and Palestine.

Lipman, 80, said she feared the actor had been radicalised and described his actions as "virtue-signalling".

"I am asking for him to have the courage to face me and tell me what he thinks it is I should do, or think, or say," she told The Times.

"I would like to reassure him that I will not be arriving with a star of David on my forehead, nor am I trying to argue him out of his point of view.

"He has to wake up and smell the grass. I have worked with actors for 60 years who often don't share my politics. I don't ask them, and they don't ask me."

She said that if McCarthy did not want to work with her, "then fair enough". She added: "But if he won't meet with me, then he's a coward.

"And if he doesn't grow up then he's going to limit himself to working with just Mark Ruffalo and Javier Bardem for the rest of his career."

McCarthy, who has appeared in the BBC drama *The Fall* and the Channel 4 soap *Hollyoaks*, announced on Instagram he was withdrawing from *Right Before I Go* at London's Soho Theatre over his co-star's political views.

The Northern Irish actor wrote: "Because of views she has publicly and repeatedly expressed regarding Israel and Palestine, I did not feel comfortable personally promoting her involvement. I did not ask for her casting to be reconsidered or expect anyone else to share my position. I simply chose not to use my own platform to promote someone whose political views are at odds with my own."

The show draws on real suicide notes from celebrities, veterans and bullied teenagers, and is followed by a conversation involving the cast, audience and a mental health professional.

Lipman, who has been nominated for seven Olivier Awards, said that she had agreed to do the play because it was for a good cause. Her appearance is scheduled for World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10.

She has previously said, after two Jewish men were stabbed in London, that she believed antisemitism in Britain had reached levels akin to Germany in 1933.

Fabric nightclub plans 'rave in the nave' gigs at St Paul's

Katherine Plummer

St Paul's Cathedral has embraced the "rave in the nave" phenomenon after signing a four-year deal with the London nightclub Fabric to hold contemporary music events.

Under the partnership, Fabric will become St Paul's exclusive partner for concerts from a range of musical backgrounds.

Cameron Leslie, co-founder of the dance club, called the partnership "incredibly exciting", adding that it would represent "an extraordinary and unexpected coming together of two very different parts of London".

"We look forward to inviting people to experience the unique atmosphere that live music can create within this remarkable setting," she said.

This is not the first time the cathedral has hosted music events. The Christopher Wren-designed building hosted a concert with RY X, an Australian indie folk act, in 2024, and another concert with Patti Smith, the American punk-rock singer, in 2025.

Sandra Lynes Timbrell, director of visitor engagement, said that the events would introduce new visitors to the cathedral and "showcase world-class talent and create unforgettable experiences for audiences within one of London's most iconic spaces".

The first concert will take place on October 29 but the artist and further details are yet to be announced.

‘I’m losing hope for my bride and family’

A newly married Briton has described his anguish at discovering that the home where his wife, mother, brother and uncle were staying was washed away by Nepal’s devastating floods (David Brown writes).

Pramod Poudel, 34, had “diminishing” hope of finding his bride and family a week after the disaster.

More than 1,000 people have been confirmed dead and 4,000 remain missing. Ed Miliband, the foreign secretary, yesterday spoke in the Commons and revised the total of British tourists missing to 36.

Nepali authorities controversially began burying unidentified victims of the disaster on the edge of a golf course in a suburb of Kathmandu yesterday.

Poudel, from Uckfield, East Sussex, arrived in Nepal on Friday to search for his family. He trekked for 11 hours through the Himalayas to the village of Sole Bazaar where his wife, Sumitra, 25, was staying with his family, after their wedding in June.

He has been unable to cross the Trishuli River to his family’s home because all the bridges were destroyed by the wall of water, ice and debris caused by a glacier collapse last Wednesday morning.

“Where my house was, there is a large hole,” he said. “There is nothing, there is nothing left. There was a sort of landslide.

ROJAN SHRESTHA FOR THE TIMES

Ninety per cent of the people who were living in the village have been taken by the flood.”

Poudel, who runs a Nepalese food truck, said: “I spoke to my uncle and father-in-law who were on the other side.

“They asked the people who were still there and they said they have not seen my wife or mother. They were probably doing something in the kitchen when the flood came. There was no warning, they were just taken.”

His mother, Tulisa, 52, brother Pardip, 31, and uncle Madhav, 64, are among 56 of the 150 residents in the village who are still missing.

Pramod Poudel’s wife, Sumitra, is missing in Nepal, where unidentified victims are buried near a golf course

“I was speaking to my wife just a few minutes before the flood,” Poudel said. “At the end of the call she said to me, ‘I miss you so much and I love you so much.’ I said, ‘I love you too and I miss you.’ My hope is diminishing. I have lost my mother, my brother, my wife and my uncle. The land I had here has gone. I have nothing. I do not know what I am going to do.”

Poudel said he contacted the British embassy in Kathmandu the day before leaving for Nepal but had not received a response. “I hoped they would be able to give me some support, perhaps get me across the village so I can see for myself what has happened, to know for sure that my wife is not there,” he said.

The Foreign Office said staff were “working around the clock to support British nationals and their families”. Mortuaries have become overwhelmed so the government has issued a decree allowing the authorities to bury unidentified victims in mass graves after DNA samples have been taken to allow possible future identification. The order is controversial as most families in Nepal want their relatives cremated on traditional funeral pyres.

Kathmandu yesterday began burials at the Gokarna Community Forest 100ft from a golf course. The site is five miles from the city centre and the bodies, kept in protective white bags, were carried by soldiers to a 6ft deep hole dug by excavators.

British rescuer wrongly named as victim saved in Nepal flood

David Brown Kathmandu

A British local councillor who was helping with the recue effort in Nepal said he was “angry and embarrassed” after being named as having been one of those saved from the deadly floods.

The Nepali army posted on Facebook yesterday night that 119 people had been rescued, “including one British citizen”, seven days after the devastating flood in which more than 1,000 are known to have died.

An army spokesman later told a press conference in Kathmandu: “We have also rescued one British male during this search and rescue operation.”

A 46-year-old man called “A Listair Chambers” was identified in an official list of 119 “rescued persons” produced by district police in Nuwakot, the area at the heart of the disaster.

The announcement of a rescue, which was swiftly picked up by media around the world, offered hope to the families of 36 Britons still missing. It was unclear whether there was another British person who was rescued.

Alastair Chambers, 45, from Quedgeley, Gloucester, who travelled to Nepal last week to help the rescue operation, believes that there has been a “dreadful misunderstanding”. Yesterday he was carried by army helicopter from one of the devastated towns where he was helping rescue teams to the Maithili Barracks, which is a hub for the rescue operation in Bidur, Nuwakot district.

Chambers told The Times: “When I got off the helicopter, they asked for my name and other details. I told them I was one of the rescuers, not someone who had been rescued. It was clear I had not been rescued.

“People are in a dreadful situation here, they need to know the truth. I am very angry with the Nepali authorities. It is clear that their record-keeping is not accurate. This is a serious problem when there are so many missing people.”

Chambers, the leader of the Community Independent Group Party on Gloucester city council, sent a series of photographs of himself with rescue teams and assisting families in towns destroyed by the flood.

“I was scrolling through the internet when I started seeing videos of the devastating floods in Nepal,” he said in a message to The Times. “I booked a one-way flight to Kathmandu for the next available flight.”

He said that he took “just a backpack, a two-man tent, some equipment and a determination to help”.

Chambers said that he previously travelled to Turkey after earthquakes and to Valencia in Spain after the floods there, and regularly delivered vehicles to Ukraine. “So I know one of the most important rules when entering a disaster zone: don’t become part of the problem,” he wrote.

“I took a thermal imaging camera so I could search for people in darkness, along with a drone and basic equipment. I also took a large amount of my own money, intending to buy whatever humanitarian supplies were needed.” Chambers said he joined rescue teams in house-by-house searches. “The heat and humidity meant that, even after several days, the smell of death had become overwhelming,” he wrote.

In June 2022, Chambers pleaded guilty to breeding and selling dogs without a licence after 25 dogs were found on his farm during a police raid. He was ordered to pay almost £50,000. In 2024, he was ordered to pay Gloucester city council’s legal costs over three years, amounting to more than £30,000.

He is also due to face a harassment trial after being accused of abusing a former council worker turned nightclub owner. He is alleged to have used homophobic slurs against Justin Hudson, the owner of Butler’s Bar in Gloucester and a former local cabinet member for the Conservatives, outside the bar on October 5, 2025. Chambers, who denied the claims, was granted bail in May and is due to go on trial at Cheltenham magistrates’ court on November 9.

Student tells of ‘kidnap’ by settlers in West Bank

Ali Mitib
Gabrielle Weiniger Israel Correspondent

A British student has called on the government to condemn violence in the occupied West Bank after he was “kidnapped by settlers” before being deported from Israel.

Finn Joughin, 22, a student at the London School of Economics (LSE), who was spending the summer teaching English to Palestinian children, was arrested in the village of Umm al-Khair, outside Hebron, on Saturday.

After Palestinians told him about a surge of attacks in recent months, the student, the son of a GP and an aid worker, decided to try “protective presence”, a tactic whereby volunteers live alongside Palestinians, to deter Israeli settlers from using violence.

Yesterday, Ed Miliband, the foreign secretary, pledged to introduce a “comprehensive reset” of UK policy on Israel “in the coming weeks”. This is expected to include embargoes on goods and services involving West Bank settlements deemed illegal under international law.

A day after being deported to the UK, Joughin, from Brighton, who has travelled extensively in the Middle East, told Times Radio: “It’s an absolutely awful scenario that they [villagers] are living through every day. Weekly harassment, targeting, and not just by settlers of course, indiscriminate questioning and harassment by police.”

When asked what he wanted the British government to do, Joughin, who

Finn Joughin, from Brighton, was deported after his detention near Hebron

maintains that acting as a protective presence was the “right thing”, called on ministers to condemn the settlers.

“My first concern is the duty of the British government to protect British citizens. I would be most interested in hearing a strong condemnation of the settler violence, but also the undeniable state complicity in allowing this violence to continue,” he said.

Footage posted online by both settlers and activists appears to show him standing by the fence and trying to protect it using his body, while a child pushes against him.

“I had been explicitly told that when dealing with settlers, you must not be aggressive. You must not give them any recourse to strike back or call the police. So I was very firm. I was standing my ground. I was making sure that I recorded the whole incident,” he said.

“All of a sudden, I was approached by one of the adults with an assault rifle. They were pushing me, shoving me, screaming in my face. Before I knew it I had been grabbed. I was put in a choke hold. I had my arm twisted behind my back and I was kidnapped, made to sit, locked in a bomb shelter, as I understand it, for at least half an hour under threat of gunfire.”

Israeli police arrested him on suspicion of assaulting a minor.

Gideon Sa’ar, the Israeli foreign minister, warned that Israel has “tools” with which it “will act against” the UK if London imposes sanctions on Jerusalem over its E1 settlement project near Jerusalem. “If Britain acts against Israel, Israel will act against Britain,” he said in a Hebrew-language podcast.

Schools urged to put flesh on bones of Henry VIII's wives

Jack Blackburn History Correspondent

Divorced. Beheaded. Died. Divorced. Beheaded. Survived.

They are words that every British schoolchild has learnt for decades, but it's a fair bet that most remember little about Henry VIII's wives beyond how they left the stage. Now there is a campaign to ensure that these women are remembered as more than single words in a rhyming scheme.

Historic Royal Palaces is leading a charge to put the six wives — or rather, the six queens — at the foreground of the national curriculum so that future generations "discover the women behind the rhyme".

"It's always been said that nobody would talk about these six queens without Henry, but arguably nobody would talk about Henry VIII without them," said Tracy Borman, chief historian at Historic Royal Palaces and a champion of the Teach the Six Queens Differently campaign. "Yes, he did some other stuff, but it's mainly his colourful marital history that makes people talk."

In recent years recognition, both in academia and in pop culture, of the roles the six queens played in British history has increased. The campaign is being conducted with support from *Six*, the hit West End musical. The queens were varied characters but all of them have compelling human stories and many helped to shape their country.

Katherine of Aragon was queen for 24 years, more than half of Henry's reign. She governed in Henry's stead when he was away at war and also rallied troops herself, donning armour while pregnant and delivering a stirring speech to forces fighting the Scots.

Then came Anne Boleyn, a woman whose enormous impact on British history tends to be eclipsed by a narrative that focuses more on her sex life and death. Yet the English Reformation was not just something she needed in order to marry the king, it was something she helped to mould.

"Anne was a religious radical," Borman said. "She was sheltering heretics from abroad. She was reading books that would probably have her burnt for heresy, so she took real risks for her faith. She was at the centre of a group of reformers at court, including Thomas Cromwell."

Jane Seymour is often dismissed as the woman who died after giving Henry a son, but she was also a wily operator who excelled at manipulating her husband and helped to set up the Seymours as power players for years to come.

Anne of Cleves went from the humiliation of her annulment to constructing a settlement with five palaces and a vast income of £20,000 a year. She was the model of how to survive and thrive as a woman in Henry's orbit, and was an early influence on Elizabeth I.

Catherine Howard's is a far sorrier tale. She was a teenager when she wed Henry and her life came to a swift end after she was pursued into adultery by Thomas Culpepper, a notorious sexual predator. "You get a sense of a woman who was fatally naive," Borman said. "But ultimately she doesn't have much agency or control over her fate."

Last, Katherine Parr is often thought of as a nursemaid to the ailing king, but she was a brilliant linguist and theologically astute.

The national campaign will provide free learning resources, subsidised school sessions and teacher training. There will also be new palace trails, including a Six Queens week for schools at Hampton Court Palace in July.

Natalie Portman, right, as Anne Boleyn and Scarlett Johansson as her sister, Mary, in the film The Other Boleyn Girl

TMS

diary@thetimes.co.uk | @timesdiary

No longer here, Keir

Nothing became Sir Keir Starmer's political career like the leaving of it: with a final U-turn. Starmer's unexpected departure from parliament sees him claim an unwanted record. His was the shortest period for a Commons PM between first becoming and finally ceasing to be an MP (11 years), which means that Liz Truss (14 years) has one line fewer in the *Guinness Book of World Calamities*. After Starmer's announcement, many observers recalled jokes he made while in opposition, suggesting that the then PM Rishi Sunak was "in such a hurry to get back to California". Well, soon only one of those two will still be representing his constituents.

The forthcoming by-election is a nice change for expense departments at newspapers who, after paying thousands for train fares to Gorton, Makerfield and Clacton, can now expect a few bus tickets to Holborn. However, it is certainly bad news for one exhausted person. "Can't get a moment's peace on this bloody planet," said Count Binface.

NOT CLEVER, MR YELLAND

David Yelland, the former tabloid editor who now has a BBC podcast about PR, did not have a relaxing bank holiday weekend after he tweeted about James Cleverly's candidacy for mayor of London. Yelland disapprovingly posted: "Liz Truss's Brexit Chancellor for ten seconds says Andy Burnham has 'declared war on London'." Whoops. Infamously, Kwasi Kwarteng was Liz Truss's chancellor. Cleverly was foreign secretary or, as he put it to Yelland: "I'm the other black one." The ex-hack said he "made a mistake" and apologised, but the Tory party chairman, Kevin Hollinrake, said the confusion was "quite some achievement for a man who makes a living telling everyone else how politics and the media work". It got worse for Yelland. When Festus Akinbusoye announced he would challenge Cleverly, Mark Wallace, the former chief executive of Conservative Home, said: "Pray for David Yelland."

PETRAEUS IMPRESSED BY MESS

David Petraeus, below, the American general and former CIA director, was chuffed to deliver the Lord Speaker's lecture last night. "It could almost make me feel a bit important," he told peers, but he assured them that he had been taught to keep his feet on the ground. Not by the British though, because Petraeus earned wings while with the Parachute Regiment. "That introduced me to one of Britain's more distinctive military traditions: mess rugby," he said. This is where rugby is played in formal mess dress uniform, and it's a sport which captures the character of our armed forces. Petraeus said: "I quickly discovered that British officers often approach such activities with considerably greater enthusiasm than common sense."

The band Joy Division are the subject of a warts-and-all release of live recordings. Surviving members of the Mancunian miserabilists have released Eternal, *a 14-CD and two-DVD collection, the notes of which apologise for varied audio quality across these fan recordings. Sometimes the audio isn't the problem. One gig in Preston was interrupted by an electrical fault. Listeners are treated to the joyous sound of the audience being told: "Anyone from Birmingham, the coach is going in five minutes."*

JACK BLACKBURN

morrisons.com Majority of stores, online may vary. Excludes Morrisons Daily. Kenco Smooth & Rich Coffee 200g, £30/kg. Nescafé Gold Blend Signature & Decaf 190g, £31.58/kg. Cadbury Brunch Raisin & Chocolate Chip 4x28g, £6.70/kg. Cadbury Timeout Chocolate Wafer Bars 5x18g, £8.33/kg. Walkers Classic & Meaty Variety Pack 20x25g, £7/kg. Pepsi Max & Max Cherry 15x330ml, £2.02/litre. Pampers Premium Protection New Baby Size 1 50 pack, 6p per nappy. Pampers Premium Protection New Baby Size 2 Essential Pack 44 pack, 6.8p per nappy. Pampers Premium Protection New Baby Size 3 Essential Pack 40 pack, 7.5p per nappy. Pampers Pants Pull-On Size 3 Midi 36 pack, 8.3p per nappy. Walkers & Pepsi ends 06/09/2026, Pampers & Nescafé ends 13/09/2026, Brunch & Timeout ends 15/09/2026. Kenco ends 6/10/2026.

News

Extra facial recognition cameras behind a fifth of Carnival arrests

David Woode Crime Editor

Almost one in five arrests at Notting Hill Carnival involved live facial recognition technology (LFR).

The Metropolitan Police said 636 people were detained across the two main days of the event in west London over the bank holiday weekend, which is a modern record.

There were 242 arrests on Sunday and 394 on Monday for offences including weapons, drug possession and supply, sexual offences and assaults, including assaults on emergency workers. A man believed to be in his twenties died after entering a canal off Kensal Road while officers pursued him.

Up to two million people enjoyed the annual celebration of Trinidadian masquerade on its 60th anniversary. This year was the first time the Met deployed LFR within carnival area, rather than on the approaches.

The technology connects cameras to a watch list containing photos of suspects wanted for a range of offences, or other people of interest such as those on bail conditions. As people pass a camera, their facial measurements are scanned for a match against the database, which alerts officers to stop them.

It led to 121 arrests, 19 per cent of the total and up from 61 in 2025 when cameras were only on the approaches to the carnival. People caught this year include seven registered sex offenders who were found in breach of their conditions or notification requirements. Officers detained 44 people wanted for violence against women and girls. Deputy Assistant Commissioner Ben Russell said: "The increased deployment of live facial recognition at Notting Hill Carnival has been a game changer, helping officers identify wanted offenders in real time and step in before further harm can be caused."

A handgun was among 68 weapons seized after frontline officers were granted temporary powers to stop and search anyone with grounds for suspicion. Before the carnival, the Met and Greater Manchester police arrested seven members of a suspected gang that targets music festivals and events.

Notting Hill Carnival Ltd, the event organiser, said: "Often the number of arrests at Carnival is a focus and it should be understood that this is a tiny proportion of the up to two million attendees a year."

Senior officers decided to implement LFR after the 2024 carnival weekend was "marred by unacceptable violence", including two murders. This year's expansion prompted Big Brother Watch, a privacy campaigning group, to call it a "mass surveillance tool that treats all Carnival-goers as potential suspects".

OLIVER DIXON

Pots of colour A vibrant display of lilies from Harts Nursery is prepared for yesterday's opening of the RHS Wisley Flower Show near Woking. It runs until Sunday

Jewellers decry 'ghoulish' plan for Hatton Garden raid bar

Ellie McDonald, Callum Martin

Jewellers have criticised a "bad taste" plan to turn the site of the infamous 2015 Hatton Garden raid into a robbery-themed bar.

The plans would also entail the closure of a jewellery shop, above the vault, that was founded by a Holocaust survivor and is still run by his family.

E Katz & Co was founded by Emil Katz in 1946 seven years after he had fled Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia with a handful of diamonds sewn into his suit. Today, the business is run by Emil's son George, 86, who joined his widowed mother, Edith, in the firm nearly 70 years ago.

In the raid, over the Easter weekend, a gang of six elderly burglars climbed down a lift shaft and drilled through the wall of the Hatton Garden Safe Deposit. They stole an estimated £14 million in cash, jewellery and valuables.

The raid has been dramatised on TV, radio and in films, including *King of Thieves* starring Michael Caine.

George Katz told the Islington Tribune, the local newspaper, that the plan was "ghoulish and completely inappropriate". He said: "A lot of people lost their livelihoods in the 2015 robbery. Most people didn't have insurance as safe deposits are supposed to be rock solid, they are nearly impossible to get into. People had such a setback."

The planning application submitted to Camden council in July by landlord Pearl & Coutts proposes replacing the jeweller's shop with a stairwell and lift access to the basement containing the vault, leading to a glitzy underground bar themed around the robbery.

Mark Pastor, 40, who sells watches, said: "It's very interesting that that's the kind of theme that they're going with. As jewellers and watch sellers, we don't want to glorify robberies.

"It's in bad taste. If you weren't insured, you would have lost everything. If you're still working in Hatton Garden and you've lost 30, 40, 50 grand and now there's a bar glorifying it, it's a bit of a kick in the balls."

The bar's developers plan to keep the hole drilled into the vault as a feature

According to the planning application, the site is a "largely vacant space and storage space including an existing vault" with a small jewellery workshop area. Under the plans, original features from the robbery, including the broken door gate, the drilled hole in the wall and the safety deposit boxes, would be retained as part of the new bar. The developers also plan to offer daytime tours of the scene of the heist to the general public.

A jeweller who has worked in Hatton Garden for more than 50 years, and had kept stock in the vault, said: "It's a bit funny, but is it a nice story? I don't think so. Of course it's wrong."

She and Pastor also worried about antisocial behaviour. She said: "I've seen guns, knives, crime. It's not nice to work here like it used to be."

The Katz family's shop would close, but the plans say "the interior and exterior will retain its appearance as a retail unit, ensuring it continues to contribute to the character of the area and function as a shopfront of merit". The business has been offered relocation.

Camden council said: "The council will always seek to protect Camden's existing businesses. Hatton Garden has been an established centre for the jewellery industry since the 19th century, and we will seek to secure new premises suitable for jewellery workshops and related uses and protect them through planning obligations."

Pearl & Coutts was approached for comment.

Family pay tribute to girl, 7, who died in fire

Peter Chappell

The family of a seven-year-old girl who was killed in a house fire said she was "deeply loved and will be missed beyond words".

The tribute to Valentina Foster came after 23-year-old Jaden Wright appeared in court charged with murdering her and her aunt, Natalie McDonald, 34, who died following a blaze at a property in Grangetown, near Middlesbrough.

Cleveland police released the family tribute to Valentina which said: "It is with overwhelming sadness that we share the heartbreaking news that our beloved daughter has passed away.

"She was deeply loved and will be missed beyond words by her family, friends and everyone whose life she touched.

"Our lives have changed for ever, and we are struggling to come to terms with this devastating loss.

"Our daughter will always be in our hearts, and her memory will live with us for ever. Forever missed by her brothers and sisters."

The pair died in the early hours of August 26. Cleveland police said a man and a woman remained in hospital receiving treatment for injuries sustained in the house fire. Two others, who cannot be identified because of their age, were also injured.

Wright, of no fixed address, appeared at Teesside magistrates' court yesterday for a hearing that lasted less than two minutes. He was remanded in custody and will appear at Teesside crown court tomorrow.

He faces two murder charges, two counts of grievous bodily harm with intent and two charges of attempted grievous bodily harm with intent. Those charges relate to the six people in the house.

He was also charged with grievous bodily harm and one count of intentional strangulation in relation to a separate incident that took place a day earlier.

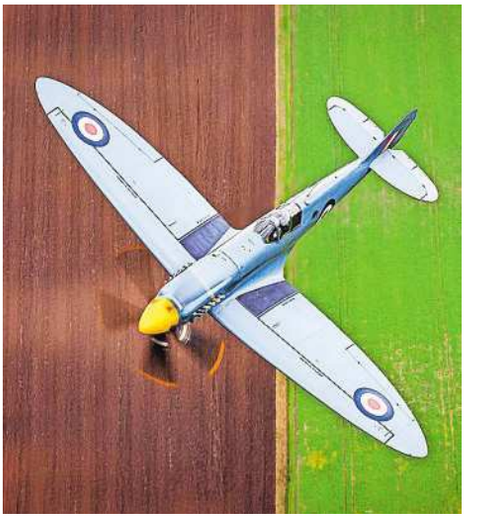
At an event held in memory of Valentina on Monday near the site of the blaze, dozens of heart-shaped balloons were released in tribute.

An update issued on Friday stated that a 48-year-old woman was in the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle in a "critical but stable" condition, while a 27-year-old man was at James Cook University Hospital in Middlesbrough receiving treatment.

Two teenage girls were discharged after suffering non life-threatening injuries.

A 31-year-old man also arrested in connection with the case was released without charge on Sunday.

AS1 EMILY MUIR, AS1 JASON RUSSELL, AS1 LEAH JONES/RAF



High achievers The Red Arrows perform a flypast over Boston, Massachusetts, in formation with a Boeing C-17 transport aircraft during an event to mark 250 years of American independence; an RAF Chinook takes part in an exercise in northern England; and a Spitfire in the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight — all winning or highly commended entries in the annual RAF Photographic Competition

Nurses to seek legal costs after trans changing room 'violation'

Jonathan Ames Legal Editor

Female nurses who won a "landmark" battle with NHS bosses over sharing changing rooms with a transgender colleague are trying to recover £400,000 in legal costs.

An employment tribunal yesterday was told the seven nurses had applied to recover 90 per cent of their lawyers' fees after managers were found guilty in January of "violating" their dignity.

In what the group's legal team at the time called a "landmark judgment", a specialist law judge ruled that the women were discriminated against and harassed by managers at County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust, which unlawfully required them to share female-only changing rooms with a biological male.

The trust's legal costs in defending the claim are at least £600,000 and could rise to about double that amount.

A witness statement submitted to the hearing at Newcastle employment tribunal yesterday by Stephen Twist, a former public governor at the trust, revealed managers had pressed ahead with the defence despite being warned of the potential cost.

Twist's statement recorded a series of warnings he raised with senior figures at the trust about the management of the dispute and the legal risk over the last six months of 2024. He that he raised concerns within days of learning of the dispute with nurses. The tribunal heard that, despite his warnings, managers continued to defend the claim at a three-week final hearing last year.

The nurses are asking the tribunal to order the trust to pay at least 90 per cent of their costs, which could bring the NHS's total legal bill above £1.5 million.

The trust contested the nurses' costs application, and the judge, Seamus Sweeney, reserved a decision to a later date. In the application for costs, the nurses argued they had to obtain expert evidence because the trust had continued disputing the proposition that women were generally more likely than men to suffer fear, distress or humiliation if compelled to undress in front of a person of the opposite sex.

Lawyers for the group of nurses said the trust in effect conceded the claim only after the expert evidence had been commissioned and presented. In addition, the nurses noted that they offered settlement terms before the hearing, but that the trust had rejected them.

They argued at the costs hearing that agreement on the central issues would have avoided much of the expense from preparing witness evidence and conducting the lengthy final hearing.

In the ruling last year on the discrimination claim, the judge said by forcing female nurses to share a changing room with a biologically male trans woman, the trust had "engaged in unwanted conduct related to sex and gender reassignment which had the effect of violating the dignity of the claimants and creating for the claimants a hostile, humiliating and degrading environment".

Bethany Hutchison, one of the nurses who brought the case, and president of the Darlington Nursing Union, said before the costs hearing: "We did not want to spend years in legal proceedings against the NHS trust for which we worked. We wanted our employer to listen to women, respect our dignity and provide lawful changing facilities in which we could prepare for our shifts in privacy."

Hutchison added: "The trust should be held responsible for the substantial legal costs that could and should have been avoided. This is public money, and NHS organisations must be accountable for decisions that expose staff and taxpayers to unnecessary litigation."

Turks & Caicos poised to lose healthcare service

Mark Hollingsworth

The sun-drenched beaches and coral reefs of the Turks & Caicos Islands are a favourite destination for British holidaymakers. Yet the Caribbean paradise faces the threat of losing healthcare services, which are being withdrawn in a bitter and costly row between the territory's government and the company that has provided care for 16 years.

In July, InterHealth ended its contract, claiming the administration had failed to pay it for 18 months. "Regrettably, it is no longer possible for InterHealth to continue providing these services indefinitely without payment," the company told The Times.

The payments were due to be made via P2G Ltd, a UK consultancy, as part of Turks & Caicos's strategy of outsourcing health services to private firms.

The British overseas territory of nine islands, where King Charles is head of state, was visited by 641,000 tourists and 1.3 million cruise passengers last year, a big increase on previous years.

InterHealth is providing services on the islands during the handover period to fulfil its contract and keep the hospitals operating. If payments are not made, healthcare will become unavailable in January. The government has privately admitted it cannot provide services until spring at the earliest.

Turks & Caicos has been dogged by political corruption. An inquiry found foreign developers gave kickbacks to win approvals for commercial developments and Crown land deals, which led to the temporary suspension of the territory's self-government status by the UK in 2009. Michael Misick, a former prime minister, was convicted of bribery and jailed in May for four years.

Turks & Caicos has already incurred nearly $40 million in costs from arbitration cases brought by InterHealth. Charles Washington Misick, the territory's premier, said. "The imperative to bring this concession to a conclusion ... has never been more urgent."

Briton died after 'torture' in Grenada

Eleanor Tait

Police are investigating the death of a British man in the Caribbean after a private post-mortem examination ordered by his family found that it was a homicide, a coroner has revealed.

Authorities in Grenada had ruled that the death of Andrew Frederick, 47, on January 4 was accidental. Yesterday, Lydia Brown, senior coroner at West London coroner's court, announced that the Met Police had begun an investigation into the "unascertained" cause of his death.

The Met said: "Officers have contacted the Royal Grenada Police Force to offer assistance and discuss how the investigation can be progressed."

Frederick's family claimed the British authorities had refused to support their fight for justice when they raised concerns about the Grenadian inquiry. After his body was returned to the UK, they pursued their own investigations, which included ordering a private post-mortem examination conducted by Professor Hubert Daisley, a pathologist approved by Grenadian police. The evidence suggested that Frederick had been subject to torture, and his death was homicide.

After the Met inquiry was announced, the Foreign Office said it was "supporting the family of a British man who died in Grenada" and that it was "in contact with local authorities".

The cause of Frederick's death is classified as "unascertained" at present, according to UK authorities.

Members of his family joined yesterday's hearing via video link. The inquest has been suspended, and will remain so until the police investigation is finished.

News

British team sheds light on existence of dark matter

If confirmed the result would be a landmark in fundamental physics, **Rhys Blakeley** and **Kaya Burgess** write

British scientists may have got a first direct glimpse of dark matter in a discovery that could help to solve one of science's greatest mysteries, revealing what much of the universe's matter is made of.

At a conference in Tendo, Japan, Dr Sam Eriksen, of the University of Bristol, revealed that one of the world's most sensitive dark matter detectors — an experiment housed nearly a mile underground in a former gold mine in South Dakota — had spotted what appears to be a collision between an ordinary atom and a particle unknown to science.

The result has the hallmarks that scientists would expect if a particle of dark matter, an invisible substance thought to account for 85 per cent of all the matter in the universe, had struck a piece of ordinary matter.

If confirmed the finding would be a landmark in fundamental physics. Dark matter is believed to gather in gigantic halos around galaxies, and theorists believe it streams constantly through Earth, but it has never been directly observed. "If this result is confirmed — and, for now, that's a big if — it is a breakthrough," Professor Henrique Araujo, of Imperial College London, who leads the UK contribution to the experiment, said.

Professor Chamkaur Ghag, of University College London, said: "This single event sits exactly where we would hope dark matter to appear ... and it has withstood months of scrutiny. We are not claiming a discovery, but this is a genuinely exciting moment."

Eriksen announced the data for the first time yesterday at the 2026 TeV Particle Astrophysics conference. "I've been staring at [this result] for two years," he told The Times. "Every improvement we made to the analysis didn't get rid of it; in fact they made this one event stand out even more."

For nearly a century, physicists have tried to work out what dark matter is made of. One candidate is the Wimp — a weakly interacting massive particle — a hypothetical particle that would stream through the Earth in vast numbers while almost never hitting ordinary matter.

Ordinary atoms consist of a tiny nucleus surrounded by electrons, but most of an atom is actually empty space. Ordinary matter is largely held together by electromagnetism, the force between electrically charged particles that binds electrons to atoms. Wimps are thought to carry no electric charge, so they would hardly interact with atoms at all. That means they could usually pass straight through the whole Earth.

The new result comes from LUX-Zeplin, or LZ, an international experiment whose detector is at the Sanford Underground Research Facility. The rock above shields the detector from cosmic rays, which could otherwise create signals like those expected from dark matter.

At its heart is a chamber containing seven active tonnes of liquid xenon, cooled to minus 100C. The idea is that, very occasionally, a passing Wimp should collide with the nucleus of a xenon atom. Such a collision would produce two flashes of light. One would come, almost instantaneously, from the recoiling nucleus transferring energy to other nearby xenon atoms. The collision would also free negatively charged electrons, which the detector's electric field would pull upward to the top of the xenon tank, where they would create another tiny burst of light.

Measuring the two flashes allows scientists to work out where the collision happened and distinguish nuclear recoils caused by Wimps from the far more common interactions caused by ordinary particles of matter passing through the tank.

The Bristol-led team examined 220 live days of data collected between March 2023 and April 2024. One collision stood out. It looked like a nuclear recoil with an energy of about 248 kiloelectronvolts, making it an unusually high-energy collision. In a pre-print paper, the team reports that the event is compatible with several possible forms of Wimp interaction.

The event, recorded on June 16, 2023, occurred well inside the detector rather than close to the wall of the tank of xenon, where natural radiation is more likely to intrude and give false results.

If it was caused by dark matter, the results suggest a Wimp with a mass of at least 200 times that of a proton.

The researchers have stressed there is still a chance that some other very rare background phenomenon has caused the finding. The result has been given a statistical significance of 2.6 sigma, or roughly a one in 200 chance of known background processes producing something at least this striking. Particle physicists normally ask for five sigma — odds of about one in 3.5 million — before declaring a discovery.

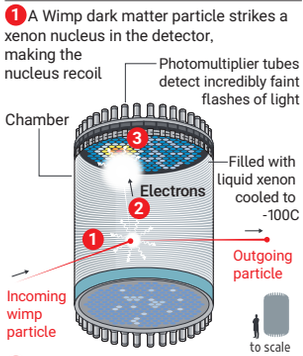
The team spent months considering other explanations. None has yet provided a convincing answer.

Professor Alex Murphy, of the University of Edinburgh, said: "One of the first to consider the possibility of unseen matter in the galaxy was Lord Kelvin of Glasgow University in 1904.

"So there's a lot of history here. Rather than perhaps being an end to this journey, the interesting event we've seen might be a whole new start."

Space economy, Business, pages 28-29

How the LZ detector works



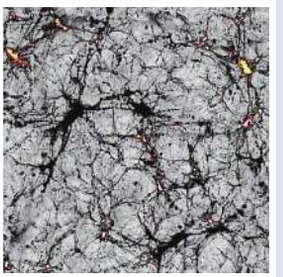
2 As the recoiling nucleus moves through the liquid xenon, it transfers energy to nearby atoms, producing a prompt flash of light. It also frees negatively charged electrons, which the detector's electric field pulls upward

3 Those electrons move to the surface, where they create a second, larger light signal

MATTHEW KAPUST/SANFORD UNDERGROUND RESEARCH FACILITY/PA

A dark matter detector spotted what appears to be a collision between an ordinary atom and a particle unknown to science. The sensitive detector is housed nearly a mile underground in a former gold mine in South Dakota, top left

Behind the story



You can think of dark matter as being like an invisible animal crossing a snowy field. You can't see the animal itself, but its tracks tell you something must have passed through (Rhys Blakely writes).

Astronomers cannot see dark matter either. It gives off no light and seems not to reflect it. Even the most powerful telescopes cannot photograph it. Instead, scientists believe it is there because of the marks it leaves on the universe — above all, through gravity.

Gravity is the force that pulls objects towards one another. For dark matter, shown above in a conceptual illustration, the clearest clues come from the way galaxies rotate. They spin like fairground carousels but the stars at their outer edges travel around much faster than they should.

If a galaxy contained only the stars, gas and dust that we can see, there would not be enough gravity to hold everything together. The fastest stars should fly off. Yet they don't. The best explanation is that each galaxy sits inside an enormous invisible cloud of dark matter, whose gravity provides the extra pull that keeps the galaxy together.

Gravity also bends light, known as gravitational lensing.

All this suggests that the visible "ordinary" matter around us accounts for about one sixth of the universe's matter. The remaining five sixths is thought to be "dark matter".

Women shouldn't have to fear giving birth
Alice Thomson
Page 19

Comment

Kemi's got lots right, but don't forget what's left

A Tory reshuffle is neither here nor there for a leader who must appeal to voters who want a responsible government

Daniel Finkelstein

@DANNYTHEFINK

The playwright Sir Tom Stoppard had a favourite story of his early career as a journalist. "I had an interview with Mr Charles Wintour, the editor of the Evening Standard. At one point, Mr Wintour asked me if I were interested in politics. Thinking all journalists should be interested in politics, I told him I was. He then asked me who the current home secretary was. Of course, I had no idea who the current home secretary was. And, in any event, it was an unfair question. I'd only admitted to an interest in politics. I hadn't claimed I was obsessed with the subject."

When Kemi Badenoch reshuffled her shadow cabinet she was moving out people hardly anyone had ever heard of and replacing them with other people hardly anyone had ever heard of. There is little to be gained from this, save the contribution the new appointees can make to advancing her strategy. Which makes this a good moment for considering what that strategy is and what it ought to be.

The starting point is to reflect that what she is doing certainly hasn't worked yet. And it may well be nothing can work.

This doubtless seems harsh, given her personal performances have been strong and she is doing many of the right things. I also think there is an appetite for what she has to offer, someone decisive and tough as well as clearly intelligent. A year ago this would have seemed a hopelessly generous assessment. Now it is a pretty common opinion. So why my more downbeat description of the overall position?

It is because support for the Conservatives has not followed her personal ratings upwards. The party's support in polls has remained essentially the same for the past year, ticking up a couple of points, ticking down a couple of points. And focus groups are clear why this is.

A year ago voters had hardly noticed Kemi Badenoch. Now they have, and they are often positive. But then they add, "although the Conservative Party is finished". They just aren't interested in a party which failed them in office and they think can't possibly win. It is not certain anything can change this. So what can be done to improve her odds?

One solution canvassed is to "unite the right". This is wildly politically impractical even if it were in any way desirable. Any deal would split Reform as well as the Tories and both Nigel Farage and Badenoch have ruled it out. This leaves the alternative — "expand the right".

> Support for the Tories has not followed her personal ratings

After the last election it was suggested the Conservatives had an impossible choice between appealing to Reform-inclined voters or Liberal Democrat ones. And the gulf between them made it impossible to attract both types. But this analysis was wrong.

It is true there are voters who are core Reformers or Lib Dems. The first lot going on about lockdowns, Lucy Connolly, the MSM and the uniparty while the latter fixate on rejoining the EU and introducing PR. But most voters aren't like this. Even if they are interested in politics, like Stoppard they aren't obsessed. And they are much more similar to each other than it might seem. The Conservative Party can try to appeal to both at the same time.

The first thing uniting these voters is that they don't like the Conservatives. They feel let down, which is hard to argue with. Whatever their political priorities, they have no desire to relive the years of chaos and arguments and factions and "say one thing and do another". They need to be persuaded that the party understands this and will not repeat its errors. This feeling goes very deep. It will not be easy to erase.

These voters also want a government that works. People who voted Liberal Democrat in 2024 did not all do so because they were liberal on immigration or wanted higher taxes and welfare spending. They are often very tough on all those issues. They are also only mildly socially liberal, and certainly not "woke". They are of conservative disposition. They like the country they live in. They are not on either side of the so-called culture war, with their main inclination being to dislike social wars.

They also think these issues a distraction from responsible government that looks after public money carefully. They are (correctly) worried the country might go bust. They are (correctly) concerned that we spend too much money on those who don't work while doing too little to encourage wealth creation.

This is not, however, a system of thought. They aren't ideological. Sometimes they think completely inconsistent thoughts, change their mind or forget what their opinion is. Sometimes they don't have an opinion at all or a very good grasp of what the different parties have said on the issues. It is more a mood, an instinct.

Kemi Badenoch needs to court Lib Dem voters as much as the Reform-inclined

So the gap between these people and those tempted by Reform is not unbridgeable. Some Reform voters (like some Lib Dem voters) are unreachable. But many are only drawn to Reform because they don't want a left government and they think it's over for the Tories. Ironically the more Kemi Badenoch attracts 2024 Lib Dem voters, the better she might do with these Reform-inclined voters.

From this you can see there's a lot the opposition leader has been getting right this year. The turn to the economy from culture issues, the emphasis on wealth creation rather than welfare distribution, and most of all establishing a position that is robustly Conservative but not populist.

This needs to be given time to work, even supposing it can. But there are other things I think she needs to guard against. Is her fiscal position realistic? Voters who might expand the right will only do so if they feel they are being told the truth. She cannot promise tax cuts while still, for instance, supporting the pension triple lock.

Is she too ideological? New voters want to be sure the party has changed. They want discipline, they (my own position is different) don't mind candidates being excluded or the whip being withheld but they don't want it used just to freeze out one wing of her party. Which it has been.

> One solution is to 'unite the right'. This is wildly impractical

And there are policies I think will come unstuck as the election nears. Uncommitted voters are opposed to mass immigration but they won't want those who have been given indefinite leave to remain being evicted from their council homes. I think if they ever get to know that this is the Tory position they will think it deeply unfair and wrong. They will think it a populist position and rather un-British.

All this does require a course correction. Not a whole new direction. But definitely a touch on the tiller.

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Comment

MPs must look beyond their local problems

Massive constituency workloads can mean they lose any feel for public mood on national issues

James Kirkup

From a distance, it appears that MPs have gone back to work this week, because they are once again visible at Westminster. In truth, most have been toiling away busily all summer, answering constituents' emails and social media messages seeking help with health, education, social care, benefits, planning, tax ... the list is endless.

The role of an MP has changed enormously since I started my first job as a parliamentary dogsbody, 32 years ago this month. Today, MPs are "super-councillors", handling hundreds of constituent cases a week. In many ways, that means voters are getting better service from their representatives — if you have a problem with services either local or national, your MP will very probably help you with it. They and their staff deserve more credit than they get for this.

But at the same time, there is a worry that serving local concerns so busily could make MPs worse at judging the national picture. Three recent academic papers — universities are busier than they look over summer, too — shed useful light on the work of modern MPs.

The first, by Kit Kowol of King's College London and Richard Toye of Exeter, charts the rise in public correspondence with MPs. Where it used to be more common for voters to write to express views on the issues of the day, now most who get in touch are seeking help with problems. Email, now supercharged by AI, makes it easier to write seeking help; the crumbling of local government budgets and services increases the need for that help.

Mail volumes are huge. Some MPs' offices report 2,000 new inquiries a month. All must be assessed and answered; many become active case-files generating weeks or months of iterative correspondence with official bodies. Parliamentary staffing levels have risen, but not as much as the stress levels of those staff.

The second study, in the British Journal of Political Science, shows that MPs are very good at responding to those requests for help, regardless of the political persuasion of the person asking for help. Münster University's Daniel Bischof asked real voters to write to their MPs seeking help, while also declaring their party preferences. The study set out to test the hypothesis that MPs would be more helpful to their own voters than others but found no evidence that that was the case.

> They should have a decent idea of what the nation is thinking

In other words, MPs do their job and serve their constituents without favour or preference. In an age when we talk a lot (perhaps too much) about polarisation and political failure, that finding should be highlighted, and celebrated. But there's more to parliament than casework. MPs vote to decide on legislation, the fate of governments and the course of the nation. They should, in theory at least, have a decent idea of what the nation is thinking, even if they don't necessarily vote accordingly.

Which brings us to the third study, by Lisa-Maria Tanase at Cambridge University. It asked 100 MPs to complete a survey estimating public opinion on a range of climate and energy policies, then compared the politicians' guesses with polling evidence. The conclusion was that MPs significantly underestimate public support for climate-related policy interventions, on average by 11 percentage points and sometimes by wider margins.

MPs' misjudgments skew to both left and right. Ipsos Mori last year found similar misjudgment on other issues: 62 per cent of MPs agreed that Britain should allow as much immigration as the economy needs to support growth, a view taken by only 32 per cent of voters.

Is there a connection between MPs more assiduously tending to their growing mailbags and a seeming disconnection from the wider public? The risk of spending so much time on casework is that it activates the normal human heuristic of anchoring. Our perceptions are always coloured by our recent experience. If you spend your day talking to people who hate cats, you'll be more likely to think that Britain is a nation of cat-haters. And if your working week is heavy with people angry about their energy bills, you might underestimate public willingness to pay more to address climate change.

Privately, some Labour people fret that their MPs' focus on caseloads in which benefits claimants are over-represented makes it harder for them to see the welfare system, and its costs, in the wider national context. Last year, just as Labour MPs were voting against welfare reform, the British Social Attitudes poll — the gold standard of public opinion — was reporting that public willingness to pay to fund welfare payments was at an all-time low.

The mailbag can fuel confirmation bias, too. In the words of Kowol and Toye in the Historical Journal: "The sifting process was useful because it helped MPs find real voter opinions they could cite in public — often in support of views that they already held."

No column about the role of MPs is complete without the obligatory quote from Edmund Burke and his address to the electors of Bristol, which established the largely imaginary ideal of parliamentarians as Athenian guardians, loftily weighing the national interest without regard for local trivia. We should be pleased that MPs give such good service to their constituents, but also hope that that they pay heed to an updated form of Burke's wisdom: "Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your email demanding help with your planning application for your kitchen extension or your application for PIP."

Roger Boyes is away

Matthew Parris Notebook

Time to weigh in on gym-averse fat jabbers

A letter to The Spectator's agony aunt wonders how best to make clear, without being showy, that the writer's trim physique is owed to self-discipline, rather than the Ozempic shortcut.

How I sympathise. After the age of about 50 a man's weight begins to develop a horribly close relationship with how much he eats. For nearly 30 years that melancholy truth has led me to refuse innumerable second helpings, many lunches, most breakfasts and that almost irresistible packet of salt and vinegar crisps between meals. I try to walk five kilometres a day, and invariably walk up moving escalators.

But for what? Now chubby friends streak past me in the weight-control stakes after almost no effort on their part. It isn't fair! Achievement should require effort. Virtue should hurt. Have you noticed the media appetite for anything that suggests a health risk from vaping? If news should come that weight-loss drugs have disagreeable side-effects, which of us who do it the hard way would not respond with a little chuckle of satisfaction?

Diplomacy by the book

A retired diplomat, Michael Hodge, has published a book, *A Different Kind of Diplomat*, about what in his day was called Branch B of the diplomatic service. In my day (this was the mid-1970s) Branch B was called Grade 9. I was Grade 8: the "Administrative" grade. This was for those who might have been called high-flyers (though I never flew high) and there were only about a dozen of us new entrants in the year I was recruited. Grade 9 did not require a university degree and, though it was possible to gain promotion to Grade 8 from "the ranks", this was not a regular career path. It's fair to say that the point at which you entered was never entirely forgotten during the rest of your career.

Hodge thinks that kind of snobbery has been abolished, but I do wonder. He suggests that elitist textbooks on diplomatic etiquette have long gone, but I clearly remember a slim green volume with precisely that title: *Diplomatic Etiquette*.

I wish I'd kept my copy. Two items stand out in my memory. One was that one should never congratulate one's hostess on the meal, lest this imply she had anything to do with the kitchen.

The other was extraordinary. The booklet advised that a junior officer should never sit down on a sofa if his [sic] doing so would lead a senior officer (or the wife [sic] of a senior officer), desirous of sitting down, to have to sit next to the junior officer. Work that one out.

No-confidence vote

Andy Burnham has recently repeated his intention to change the general election voting system to some variant of proportional representation (PR), rather than first past the post, as we have now.

I have an argument for first past the post (FPTP) that I've not heard elsewhere. Most major decisions in government are binary: yes or no. The Falklands, Gulf, Iraq or Afghanistan conflicts. Or standing up to the miners (we did) or Aslef (we haven't). Or the two-child benefit cap, universal winter fuel allowance, drilling for oil in the North Sea, leaving the European Convention on Human Rights, a mansion tax ... you get the picture. So whether government is by a single party or (as PR will encourage) a coalition, big decisions will usually have to be yes or no. They cannot be graduated, like a cake mix, to reflect the proportions entering the mix.

PR can certainly give you a government better reflecting the relative popularity of many parties; but the decisions this government must make cannot reflect all the parties in that consortium. So all that PR does is move upwards, from the constituency count, the point at which somebody has to be overruled. The voters are cheated: they haven't shaken off FPTP; it has simply been moved up to the cabinet table.

Unreal ideal

Saw a photo of a woman's face in the newspaper. Too perfect. Digitally remastered. I simply shrugged. Our generation is in mid-transition from "seeing/hearing is believing", to "nothing is necessarily real". Bring it on. Scepticism will rule, and that's a good thing.

THUNDERER

British judges have no place sitting in Hong Kong courts

Jawad Iqbal

Lord Neuberger of Abbotsbury, a former president of the UK Supreme Court, stands accused of "rank hypocrisy" by pro-democracy campaigners for continuing to serve as a judge in Hong Kong's highest court. They have a point. The role has become hugely controversial after Beijing's crackdown on political dissent and basic freedoms in the territory.

What is Neuberger doing lending his judicial authority to a legal system increasingly compromised by China's repressive regime? In 2024 the Hong Kong court upheld the conviction of Jimmy Lai, a newspaper publisher and British citizen, for participating in an "unauthorised" 2019 assembly. The court handed Lai a 20-year prison sentence this year after he was convicted under national security laws of colluding with foreign forces. A draconian sentence serving as punishment for peaceful pro-democracy campaigning.

Neuberger's blindness doesn't appear to end there. He serves as a patron of the British charity Prisoners Abroad, founded 50 years ago "to protect, support and advocate for the health, welfare and human rights of British citizens in prisons abroad". How can he square these noble aims with being part of a legal process that keeps Lai behind bars? Yet the judge told The Times he did not believe there was any "conflict" between his roles. Really? Presumably he also sees no conflict in remaining president of the British Institute of International and Comparative Law, a body that promotes "a safe world where the rule of law is upheld and human rights respected".

He would be wise to heed the words of Lord Sumption, who resigned from the same Hong Kong court two years ago, warning that the city was "slowly becoming a totalitarian state" and that judges are being compromised by an "impossible political environment created by China".

There are others too with questions to answer. Lord Hoffmann, another distinguished British judge, remains on the Hong Kong bench. Why? Several City of London law firms maintain outposts in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Beijing. Yet a group of legal bodies, including the Law Society, accused China yesterday of failing to deliver on its promises to protect lawyers, thus endangering the rule of law. It is not too late for all concerned to rediscover their moral compass.

Neuberger should lead the way by quitting the increasingly discredited Hong Kong court. He must see that staying on as a judge, whatever his reasons and intentions, merely gives succour to the autocrats in Beijing who wish to stamp out democracy and the rule of law.

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Women shouldn't have to fear giving birth

Suspension of a maternity unit in North Devon is just the latest bad news from a vital service that has lost its way

Alice Thomson

@ALICETTIMES

Jemima Knight is eight months pregnant with her third child. She has been given instructions on what to do if she is forced to have her baby in a lay-by on the single-carriageway A361 to Exeter, or on the M5. She and her partner will need a full tank of petrol, a high-vis vest, towels and water in the car. She has been told to wait for help cutting the umbilical cord, but mobile reception on the route is patchy.

North Devon District Hospital in Barnstaple suspended all maternity services last month due to staff shortages. It hopes to recruit enough temporary staff to allow it to reopen on September 29, but until then pregnant women in the area will have to be driven up to two-and-a-half hours to Exeter on roads often packed with holiday traffic, tractors and freight to have their babies. "My births so far have been under two hours," says Jemima. "I can't just cross my legs."

Her sister Harriet, she tells me, is expecting her first child at the end of this month and is facing an even longer drive from her rural home. She has decided to pack her bags and stay in Exeter to avoid a catastrophe. Their friends on antenatal Facebook groups are panicking they won't make it in time. Some don't have a car, they can't take a bus or train while doubled up in labour and are wondering whether a local farmer may have the necessary skills to step in.

A&E doctors at Barnstaple are being given training in dealing with obstetric emergencies if the mothers haven't made it down the M5. Saif El-Badawy, a former consultant obstetrician for 26 years at the hospital, is baffled. "Minutes separate life from tragedy," he says.

The hospital in Barnstaple has wards and birthing pools and excellent reviews on Facebook, but the trust said it no longer had the level of medical cover required due to staff departures and maternity leave. While it is confident of reopening, other temporary closures have turned out to be permanent. Ian Roome, the local Liberal Democrat MP, warns someone will die. The local ambulance trust has made it clear it will struggle to provide reliable transport; minicab services are reluctant to take women in labour while having contractions. Those with enough money may book a hotel room in Bristol or Exeter, but it could cost them a fortune if their baby is overdue.

Maternity care is broken in this country. Maternal deaths (the mortality rate for women who die during or soon after pregnancy) in the UK are now the highest per head in Europe at 12.8 deaths per 100,000 in 2023, compared with 10.6 in 2009. Baroness Amos, who chaired the National Maternity and Neonatal Investigation, says the failings are far worse than anticipated. A staggering 748 recommendations for improvement have been made in the

> Of 131 units inspected, only 4 per cent were rated 'outstanding'

past ten years after catastrophic scandals at East Kent, Shrewsbury and Morecambe Bay were uncovered, yet the service is still deteriorating. Highlighting systemic failings, Amos warned of poor ward hygiene, women going without meals, bleeding out in bathrooms, a dismissive, misogynist culture and lack of compassion among clinical teams, with midwives stretched to exhaustion.

A third of new mothers say their experience was harrowing; 5 per cent have severe post-traumatic stress disorder. Last year, I interviewed Theo Clarke, a former Conservative MP, who led the all-party parliamentary group on birth trauma after she suffered horrendous injuries during delivery. She and her colleagues talked to 1,300 women who had devastating stories of failings in the impersonal system. Many, like Theo, will never risk having another child.

"Maternal negligence liabilities in England in the last five years reached £27.4 billion, more than the £18 billion allocated to maternity care cover," she says. Britain should copy New Zealand and introduce a no-fault procedure to compensate families quickly. This halved New Zealand's compensation bill and allowed it to focus on better staffing and equipment.

The Care Quality Commission inspected 131 units in 2023-24, of which 36 per cent were rated "requires improvement", 12 per cent were "inadequate" and only 4 per cent were "outstanding". The UK spends 11.1 per cent of GDP on healthcare; the OECD average is 9.3 per cent. The number of midwives has risen, while our birth rate has fallen. Yet we still have the worst outcomes in Europe for mothers and babies. It's as much about systems and culture as cash.

The government needs to address why so many local services have been closed, and why provision has become so incompetent and remote. Over the past decade, 31 delivery units have closed, and maternity deserts now stretch across the southwest, the east of England, Northumberland and Yorkshire.

Smaller hospitals are nervous of being sued; the average age of women giving birth is increasing, and 26 per cent of pregnant women are obese. It's easy to see why smaller units may prefer to offload potentially complicated births on to larger trusts. Midwifery has shifted since the 1970s from a personalised, community-based model to a hospital-centric conveyor belt operated by strangers. Yet many mothers would be happier closer to home, forming bonds with midwives they have learnt to trust.

The birth rate in this country is plummeting. But who would want to have a baby when the stakes are so high and Instagram is filled with dispatches from struggling mothers who feel as though they have escaped a war zone, their bodies ripped apart? Sky News analysed 377,852 social media posts about UK maternity services this summer; only 21 per cent had a positive tone. Thirty-seven per cent said exhausted staff had been unsympathetic.

One day, when we wonder where all the babies have gone, we'll realise why reliable, local maternity services are crucial to life.

Letters to the Editor

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Healey's 'hypocrisy'

Sir, Peter Brookes's cartoon (Aug 31) of John Healey surrendering is spot on. When Mr Healey resigned as defence secretary I felt that finally there was a politician putting country ahead of career. I should have known better. His cabinet promotion and a change of heart on defence spending make it clear that he was simply positioning himself for the post-Starmer world. I hope he understands how betrayed those he has abandoned feel.
Commander Tom Herman (RN, ret'd)
Hoveton, Norfolk

Sir, General Lord Dannatt's broadside (letter, Aug 28) at the government's continued dithering over funding our defence was most welcome, especially after the recent silence of despair from the long list of defence secretaries, fellow defence chiefs, commentators and academics who have been warning our governments for decades. The hope that the new chancellor would remedy the situation over which he resigned as defence secretary has been dashed. Instead of the brave man of principle he appeared on resignation he has turned out to be shallow and weak. He has abandoned the promise to fund defence at 3 per cent of GDP by 2030, instead talking of "setting out that clear path" — another meaningless soundbite ("Healey: I'll prove I am no hypocrite on defence", Sep 1). If he had an ounce of moral fibre, he would resign.
Lt-Col Ian Tritton (ret'd)
Minety, Wilts

Sir, Max Hastings is surely right that "vastly more advanced technical savvy is wanted" to improve our defences in the digital age ("The Army's Reserve has become a mockery", Sep 1). There is surely an opportunity here to enlist our Neets. Many of them are well versed in electronic games and other skills that must be of value to the modern military — as Ukraine's success with drones has demonstrated.
Andrew Fraser
London SW19

Notting Hill arrests

Sir, In your report "Man dies in canal during Notting Hill Carnival" (Sep 1), the Metropolitan Police said it made 560 arrests over the two days of the carnival. It added, apparently without irony, that the event "largely passed without incident".
Andrew Leslau
Fawley, Hants

Corrections and clarifications

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Lack of soft skills and youth unemployment

Sir, One of the reasons that companies have difficulty integrating young joiners ("Neets crisis made worse by youths' lack of 'soft skills'", news, Aug 31) is because of working from home instead of the office. When I first started working it was five days a week in the office surrounded by experienced staff who set an example and instructed me in what was expected in that job. I now work in a company where we mostly work from home, meeting up occasionally in our office. This really works beautifully until we need to take on a young inexperienced member of staff. They do not get the daily interactions that they need and the drop out and failure rate is very high. The solution is to insist on staff working mostly in the office, especially in the public sector.
Steve Vogt
Petersham, Richmond upon Thames

Sir, It is unrealistic to expect any school-leaver to have the soft skills that their critics say that they should. Such skills are developed only in the workplace in an environment of mentoring, instruction and work-a-day discipline. The real problem lies in the fact that few employers have the means to pay the minimum wage of £10.85 an hour for an employee aged 18-20 who will not be able to make any contribution to that business for several weeks or months. Coupled with the disastrous effect of increased employers' national insurance contributions, the result is that no offer of employment is made.
Laurence Factor
Stanmore, Middx

Sir, Reading Emily Shulman's appraisal of the graduate jobs market I feel sympathy — it's a saturated market and I do not envy her ("The brutal reality of the graduate job search", Times2, Aug 31). By way of suggestion, may I recommend applying to join the armed forces? With the world ever more uncertain, the military could always use more bright and motivated twentysomethings. I have served in the armed forces since 2011: it's a decent wage, invaluable experience and facilitates both experience and further study if so desired. If nothing else, the assessors will at least give her some genuine feedback.
Stuart Milligan
Headley, Hants

Sir, Over many years, whenever I asked employers what skills they were looking for in young people they usually highlighted getting to work on time, putting in a full day's work, not clock-watching, team work and responding positively to instructions. I am surprised it has taken the Department for Work and Pensions so long to discover this. We might expect such "soft skills" to be inculcated in all our schools, as they already are in the most successful ones.

More widely, the threatening international situation, as well as the response to climate change, show the need for a trained reserve of resilient young people for civil defence, humanitarian relief and military regeneration. Meanwhile, there are almost a million Neets. Each of these problems could be addressed by a compulsory nine months of "citizen's service" training for all school leavers.
Geoffrey Van Orden
Former MEP; Bildeston, Suffolk

Sir, I have spent more than 30 years as a business coach and mentor, and loathe the term "soft skills". There's nothing soft in teaching young people the simple art of communicating with each other, behaving in a civilised and decent manner and improving the performance and productivity of many public and private organisations as a result. Most people take for granted that it's easy and we can all do it without help and support. But that's not the case. It's a minefield laid within a maze.
Charles Helliwell
London SW18

Risky rugby flypast

Sir, Further to the low-formation flyover at Cape Town's DHL Stadium, when two passenger jets dipped as low as 41ft above the roof before the kick-off between South Africa and New Zealand, the airline's defence that each aircraft was flown by a highly experienced crew after weeks of "careful planning and rehearsal" ignores basic physics ("Aviators divided over daring low pass over stadium in South Africa", Aug 30). At an altitude of under 50ft, a single unplannable variable such as an engine failure, bird strike or thermal downdraft would have made a catastrophic crash into the stands — and 56,500 fans — unavoidable.

A stark contrast in safety culture was demonstrated at the Southport Air Show last weekend. The Red Arrows aborted their display after just two minutes because sudden heavy rain rendered conditions unsafe. British aviation teams respect environmental boundaries and hard-won safety rules after the Ramstein and Shoreham disasters: aircraft energy must never be directed over a crowd. Bypassing these parameters for a stadium spectacle introduces an indefensible gamble. Relying on a lucky outcome to validate a dangerous stunt is a delusion.

I witnessed a Russian aircraft stall and crash coming into land on a Russian carrier when I served in the Royal Navy, so I am well aware that rare things can — and do — happen.
Dr Richard NA Wood
Widnes, Cheshire

Core of compassion

Sir, The underlying point that Libby Purves (comment, Aug 31) is making is that early difficulties or present expectations do not erode moral agency. The girl who thought Boots was not for her has to realise that she has a moral responsibility to work and not to latch on to the state, even if that work does not meet her personal expectations of salary or interest. For the state to make financial assistance so readily available does nothing to remedy that. Similarly, punishment, whether in the family or in the criminal justice system, has as one of its fundamental concerns the respecting and the arousing of moral responsibility. As the headline to Libby's piece says, "Compassion alone won't cure Britain's ills". We all desire a compassionate society but that is only possible when moral responsibility is placed at its heart.
Michael Cavaghan-Pack
Taunton, Somerset

Twelve times table

Sir, Ann Treneman (Notebook, Aug 29) asks if readers can name the 12 disciples. The editor of the Hereford Times taught me this mnemonic in 1956: *These are the Twelve Apostles' names:/Peter, Andrew, John and James,/Philip and Bartholomew,/Thomas and Matthew too,/James the less and Thaddeus the Helper,/Simon the Zealot and Judas the Traitor*
The Rev Canon Jim Canning
Coventry

INTELLIGENT, LUDICROUS, MENACING

FROM THE TIMES SEPTEMBER 2, 1926

If there had never been a heron, some artist, who was also a naturalist, must surely have invented one. Its long black crest, streaming breast-plumes and broad grey-splashed wings seem the natural and inevitable embellishment of its bony framework, just as the framework fits its habits and needs. The heron is the largest of our wading birds, though science does not admit it into the company distinguished by that name. Its legs are proportionately less developed than those of the stilt; but it outtops it without sacrifice of its lean symmetry, and can wade to fish where the stilt would have to swim. Long legs necessitate a long neck, else the heron would fail to seize the fish it came near; and the long neck is completed by a long, sharp bill, so that the heron's gape shall grip the largest prey that it seizes like pincers, and its point transfix what it spears.

Few of us in England see wild eagles, and since we lost the crane and the bustard, the heron remains the largest bird that mounts the English sky. Of many meetings with herons in the early autumn sunshine the two most vivid were one beside a rocky rivulet high in the heather of the Welsh Black Mountain, and the other by the wind-tossed Sound of Raasay, off the fantastic cliffs of Trotternish, in Skye.

It is hard for so lean a bird to look wise, but the heron presents strong testimonials to its intelligence. The test of brains among birds and beasts is adaptability; and herons have more than one manner of fishing. When we spy them, they are generally standing still; but this often means that they have one eye on possible enemies — rude men with guns — and only the other fixed on dinner. A heron intent on fishing and unalarmed will often stride through the water with a stealthy strut which is ludicrous and yet menacing. The first family of herons which inhabited the Hyde Park dell used often to be seen stalking in the same way after house-sparrows on the grass-plot. The sparrows declined to co-operate heartily in this enterprise; they had a way of scattering, in a brown cloud, before the big bird reached striking distance. But once or twice a sparrow ran the thing too fine, and explored the heron's interior.

THETIMES.COM/ARCHIVE

Canonical books

Sir, James Marriott rightly enthuses about the virtues of studying authors such as Shakespeare, Austen and Dickens ("Untrendy classics suddenly seem refreshing", Sep 1). They are not, however, disappearing from the Cambridge OCR syllabus. Shakespeare and Austen are on the very A-level that he mentions while two Dickens titles are covered at GCSE. Milton's *Paradise Lost* is on our A-level English literature reading list, alongside *King Lear*, Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*. The classic works celebrated by Marriott are well represented in today's classrooms. To paraphrase another author from our syllabus: reports of their demise have been greatly exaggerated. Studying new and challenging texts need not lead to neglect of the classic literary canon. They are complementary.
Dr Ruth Johnson
Assessment director, Cambridge OCR

Car-free shopping

Sir, Chris Parker (letter, Aug 29) should be reassured. Although pedestrians, cyclists and people using public transport spend less on average at local shops in a single trip, they visit more often. Numerous studies have found that, over time, non-car users spend more in local shops than drivers. With online shopping causing problems for high streets, businesses and jobs should welcome the extra footfall from walkers and wheelers.
Professor Jennifer Mindell
Transport and health science group and emerita professor of public health, UCL

Small is beautiful

Sir, Further to the letters about oversized players in tennis (Aug 31 & Sep 1), a sport that has coped with this is rowing. Lightweight crews prosper and entertain. Why not then have a rugby team with a weight limit for each player? The word brutal has been used by the England rugby coach to describe the type of play needed in the collisions between the game's giants. Surely brutality is not, nor should it be, entertaining. A lightweight team might well not need it.
Julian Hall
Oxford

Sir, I had been up at university for no more than three hours when someone knocked on the door of my room and said: "We have spotted you and think you might be our smallest freshman. Have you ever coxed a boat before?" I hadn't, but the following May was fortunate enough to win a gold medal at the British Universities championship in a coxed four.
Tony Elgood
Cambridge University Boat Club 1974 and 1975; Winford, Somerset

Mammal measures

Sir, Real units of measurement can be as intriguing as wonderful inventions (letters, Aug 29 & 31). A Finnish unit of distance, the *peninkulma* (about 10km) is defined as how far a dog's bark can be heard. A Sami measure of distance is the *poronkusema* (about 7.5km): the distance a reindeer can walk before urinating.
Dr Geoff Ferreira
Cookham, Berks

Letters to The Times must be exclusive and may be edited. Please include a full address and phone number.

Daily Universal Register

UK: The first day of the autumn term for most schools; the Tour of Britain cycling race starts in Lincoln.

Nature notes

The swallows had been zipping around the village of Kirby Knowle all morning. One moment you'd see them sweeping low over the sheep pasture thistles; the next they'd be heard high above Whinmoor Hill, before coming to perch on the roof of St Wilfrid's. These swallows had been born in the crypt of the church and were about to head off for Africa. Suddenly, the dozen or so birds rose as one from the roof, and twittering angrily flew at the sparrow hawk that had suddenly appeared from Ing Dale. Their long journey south is dangerous, but so are the weeks before they leave. Studies show that only 40 per cent of young swallows actually survive long enough to begin their migration. JONATHAN TULLOCH

Birthdays today

Sir Keir Starmer KC, *pictured*, prime minister (2024-Jul 2026) and leader of the Labour Party (2020-Jul 2026), 64; **Keith Allen**, actor, *Trainspotting* (1996), *Steeltown Murders* (2023), 73; **Andrej Babis**, prime minister of the Czech Republic (2017-21), 72; **Andrew Brode**, businessman, interim chairman of RWS Group (language services company, of which he is a major shareholder), 86; **Jimmy Connors**, tennis player, Wimbledon champion (1974, 1982), and commentator, 74; **David Dinsmore**, director of government communications (permanent secretary), chief operating officer, News UK (2015-25), editor, The Sun (2013-15), 58; **Paul Goodwin**, conductor, 70; **Baroness (Mary) Goudie**, women's rights advocate, 80; **Salma Hayek**, actress, *Once Upon a Time in Mexico* (2003), *Ugly Betty* (2006-07), *House of Gucci* (2021), 60; **Guy Laliberté**, co-founder (1984), Cirque du Soleil, 67; **Lennox Lewis**, former world heavyweight champion, 61; **Prof Martin Marshall**, chairman, Nuffield Trust (health and social care think tank), Royal College of General Practitioners (2019-22), 65; **Harry Mount**, editor, The Oldie magazine, 55; **Jonathan Reekie**, director, Somerset House Trust (working arts centre in central London), 62; **Keanu Reeves**, actor, *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventures* (1990), The Matrix and John Wick film series, 62; **Shirley-Anne Somerville**, SNP MSP for Dunfermline, cabinet secretary for social justice, 52; **Moira Stuart**, BBC newsreader (1981-2018), now with Classic FM, 77; **Kate Summerscale**, writer, *The Queen of Whale Cay* (1997), *The Suspicions of Mr Whicher* (2008), *The Peepshow: The Murders at 10 Rillington Place* (2024), 61; **Amanda Thompson**, managing director, Blackpool Pleasure Beach, 64; **Ella Toone**, footballer, Manchester United and member of the Euro 2022 and 2025-winning England national teams, 27.

On this day

In **1898** Sir Horatio (later Lord) Kitchener completed his reconquest of the Sudan by his victory at the Battle of Omdurman; in **1969** Ho Chi Minh died. The North Vietnam president and prime minister commanded the communist forces during the Vietnam War.

The last word

"To jaw-jaw is always better than to war-war." Winston Churchill, remarks at a White House luncheon (1954)

Back to School

Andy Burnham's first prime ministerial appearance in parliament confirmed he is a natural performer. But his government cannot exist on good vibes alone

It has been 16 years since Andy Burnham last appeared at the ministerial dispatch box in the House of Commons. Yet when he returned yesterday, six weeks after moving into Downing Street, the prime minister was straight at ease — demonstrating his affinity with political repartee as if he had never been away. Flanked by his chancellor, John Healey, and Cabinet Office fixer, Louise Haigh, Mr Burnham delivered a rehashed version of his pronouncement over the summer: that the country needs "substantial change", a politics that does things differently, and that he provides a circuit breaker that will bring hope to every postcode.

Mr Burnham's first prime ministerial turn in parliament was a marked change from the stilted bland style of his predecessor. Sir Keir Starmer sought revenge on his successor by picking yesterday as the moment to announce he would resign as the MP for Holborn & St Pancras after 11 years. It was an apt conclusion to Sir Keir's uneven political career; one final U-turn in a long list of broken promises after he pledged on July 3 that he would remain in the Commons until the next election. The timing of this announcement was likely to have been chosen to disrupt Mr Burnham's big moment. Instead it was a reminder of how ill-suited Sir Keir was to political life — and vice versa.

The current prime minister's lengthy stint answering questions saw him reiterate many previous positions — such as being interested in electoral reform — without any specifics. Mr Burnham said we can expect "stronger public control" of essential services, but details will not be forthcoming until his ten-year plan is unveiled later this year. He rightly suggested that the water industry's failings have highlighted the challenges of poorly regulated utilities. The only fresh news was confirmation that the prime minister will jet off to the Cop31 climate talks in Turkey in November.

Mr Burnham continues to dole out positive vibes, yet fails to offer much detail on the major issues facing his government. He is most comfortable with what George Bush Sr called the "vision thing" and in his diagnosis of what he believes has gone wrong in the UK in the decade since he left the House of Commons. He cited Brexit for the UK's poor growth without explaining if he intends to change relations with the EU. He reverted to a classic Labour trope of blaming "austerity" in public services. And for good measure, he returned (again) to the 1980s and Margaret Thatcher. The prime minister has claimed he will be pro-business, but evidence or explanation of what that means have yet to be revealed.

Such rhetoric played well with Labour MPs. Yet when it was the turn of Kemi Badenoch to ask the prime minister deeper questions, he struggled. Ms Badenoch asked for a timetable to increase defence spending to 3 per cent of GDP, but no answer came. She asked him about reducing the bloated welfare bill, he responded with generalities. Ms Badenoch asked whether he would consider an off-shoring processing scheme to tackle the small boats crisis, with no answer. And she asked him to rule out tax rises at the next budget, which Mr Burnham declined to do. Taxpayers should therefore brace for what is to come.

To listen to Mr Burnham is to think that his government is not in a rush. This approach risks repeating the same error as Sir Keir by always kicking the can down the road — while the challenges deepen. Every day the number of people claiming sickness benefits is rising by 4,000. Meanwhile, the government's borrowing costs rose to an 18-year high yesterday, a reminder of the precarious nature of the UK's public finances. Reports suggest that the budget, the first real test of this government, may be a minimalist affair. Instead it would be better to see decisive action by Mr Burnham, an acknowledgment there is not a moment to lose. Every day of delay has a cost.

Pressure Point

American sanctions may not break the Iranian regime, but they can bend it

Toppling a regime as brutal as that in Iran in the short term purely by destabilising the economy through sanctions is a long shot. That is because in a tyranny economic collapse does not immediately translate into regime collapse. There is, as Adam Smith would put it, an awful lot of ruin in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Experience from Iraq and Syria shows that oppressive regimes can maintain authority for extended periods in the face of near-total economic collapse.

Short of a full-scale land invasion, which isn't going to happen, military action by the United States is unlikely to seal the regime's fate. So long as the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) can maintain a monopoly of force within Iran, a rising prompted by anything less than impending starvation appears remote. That, however, does not invalidate Donald Trump's ramping up of sanctions against Iran. The authority of a regime offering only extended hardship for its 93 million people will suffer an inevitable decline in the long run. Even now the pressure is beginning to tell.

Masoud Pezeshkian, Iran's president, and a relative pragmatist in the regime, was holding out the olive branch on Monday, even as American and Iranian forces clashed for the first time in weeks over control of the Strait of Hormuz. Promising a positive response from Tehran, he appealed to President Trump to revive the memorandum of understanding concluded between Tehran and Washington in June. "It is better that we bring the war to an end now as we are in a position of power and dignity," Pezeshkian argued last week. In saying so, he indicated that the balance of power in the strait — until the outbreak of war six months ago the avenue for a fifth of the world's crude oil and liquefied natural gas — was shifting.

Iran's closure of the strait in retaliation for air attacks by the United States and Israel sent shockwaves through the world economy, threatening energy supplies, a rebound in inflation and possible recession. The IRGC had discovered a much more effective weapon of mass destruction than the atom bomb it craved. Even now, bond yields are spiking, partly in response to heightened tensions in the strait. But quietly, Iran may be losing its grip on that crucial waterway. The Americans and their allies in the Gulf have been using a fleet of tankers to run the Iranian blockade at night. Hugging the Oman side of the strait, the ships run silent as US forces keep watch. The White House claims the flow of oil out of the Gulf is already more than half the peacetime total.

If Tehran is indeed about to lose its winning hand in its dangerous poker game with Washington, it might consider now to be a good time to fold. After all, the regime and much of its missile arsenal have survived. Why not cut a deal, ease US sanctions and restore a semblance of economic stability, and with it social stability, at home?

That is why President Trump should not agree to easing sanctions on anything but the strictest terms, including the unfettered passage of ships through the strait. He himself is under pressure as congressional midterm elections approach and diesel and gasoline prices remain high. (Brown University says Americans have paid $95 billion more for fuel since the start of the war.) But that is no excuse to go soft on the IRGC. No sanctions are perfect but Iran is clearly feeling the pressure. The more sensible voices in the regime seek to relax it. All the more reason, for now, to turn it up.

Crafty Move

Gen Zers are shunning their screens in favour of 'slow' hobbies and traditional arts

Could it be the buzz around the arrival of the monumental, 70-metre Bayeux Tapestry, which finally goes on public display at the British Museum next week? Or perhaps a need to get away from the online void of AI-generated slop? Whatever the cause, today's younger generations are quietly powering a revival in traditional arts and crafts.

Just a glance at the average Gen Zer's social media feed will quickly reveal a surprising rise in young influencers urging their followers to join them in quilting, weaving, cross-stitching, woodwork, painting and embroidering. Hobbies once assumed to be on the way out have, it seems, been handed down from one generation to the next and — appropriately enough — been restored and given renewed sheen in the social media age.

Embracing the variety of traditional crafts, Gen Zers seem unusually keen on weaving together a number of different "slow hobbies": to "hobbymaxx", as they are wont to put it. Social media hashtags celebrating an eclectic range of "grandma hobbies" have surged by 400 per cent in the last year alone. Horticultural pastimes are showing green shoots too, with many young people seeking to reconnect with nature by tending to allotments, gardens and window boxes.

Just as the original Arts and Crafts movement flourished in the shadow of Britain's industrial revolution, it seems today's rapid and sometimes alienating pace of change has provoked a countercultural return to traditional artforms. It may not be a bad way to seek solace. Much recent scientific research suggests a modest but real relationship between increased arts engagement and improved mental health. Whatever the motivation, such an unexpected re-embrace of textiles, quilting and woodwork is surely one of the more benign trends the young have come up with as a means of shocking their elders. Long may it last.

World

Allies reopen old wounds that lay

Relations between Kyiv and Warsaw are strained, writes **Anthony Loyd** in western Ukraine. Pictures by **Jack Hill**

The dead were waiting in neat rows when Olha Solodukha arrived at the cemetery. There were 55 coffins, each containing the remains of Poles killed with axes, hammers and bullets 83 years ago. The massacre by Ukrainian partisans at the nearby villages of Ostrowki and Wola Ostrowiecka left more than a thousand civilians dead.

Exhumed from mass graves this summer by a Polish-Ukrainian team of specialists, the dead — including the remains of 24 children — were reburied in a ceremony on Sunday.

Solodukha, a Ukrainian official who helped the Polish team, stood alongside descendants of the Polish victims. She carried wounds of her own: her only son Roman was killed by Russian invaders four years ago and her brothers have all served in the Ukrainian army.

She can still recall her grandmother's description of a massacre by Poles in a Ukrainian village during the Second World War: corpses mounted on stakes; the body of a pregnant woman mutilated; a well filled with blood.

"Today we have a funeral for Polish victims of the war," she said. "Yet it feels

Olha Solodukha, a Ukranian official. Below: President Zelensky at the reburial of Colonel Yevhen Konovalets

that despite everything we have done to help the Poles find their dead and arrange this service, we are still blamed by them for everything. It sometimes feels as if they still hate Ukrainians.

"Our children are on the front line defending Europe — Poles too — against Russia. Yet the Poles choose this moment to humiliate Ukrainians with continuous criticism, blaming us for what happened so long ago. "

For Poles and Ukrainians, the massacres of 1942-1944 in the border regions of Volhynia and Eastern Galicia remain bitterly disputed, despite the countries' shared enmity towards Putin's Russia.

Over the past three months, disagreements about the period in which as many as 100,000 Poles were killed by Ukrainian militants and tens of thousands of Ukrainians were killed by Poles have brought relations between the allies to their lowest point.

At the heart of the dispute are opposing views about the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, UPA, the nationalist partisan group that fought for Ukrainian independence — and killed Poles. The UPA was accused of trying to purge Poles from what is now western Ukraine. It fought against units from the Polish resistance as well as German troops. In 1944, it made peace with the Germans and turned their attention to the advancing Soviets. In Ukraine today, the UPA is celebrated for its anti-Soviet resistance. The Poles regard their members as war criminals.

"I understand the Ukrainian leadership need to find heroes to mobilise Ukrainians, but patriotism is different to nationalism," Karolina Romanowska, chairwoman of the Polish-Ukrainian Reconciliation Association, many of whose relatives were murdered by the UPA in 1943, said. "But they've decided to forget about the UPA's earlier history ... that they didn't just fight against the Soviets. It's true; UPA did fight the Soviets. But they also collaborated with Nazis and killed Poles."

In May, President Zelensky gave a Ukrainian Special Forces unit the honorary name "Heroes of the UPA". The move caused outrage in Poland, where it was seen as glorification of the killers.

Relations have since worsened. In June, the Polish President Karol Nawrocki stripped Zelensky of Poland's highest state decoration, the Order of the White Eagle. A dismissive Zelensky sent the award back by post. Other Ukrainian politicians have returned their Polish state decorations.

Last week, after demands by Polish MPs to block Ukraine's accession to the EU unless disputes about the massacres are resolved, Nawrocki wrote to Zelensky about "a number of contentious issues that we would like to gradually resolve". Unlike other letters sent by Ukraine's allies on independence day, the contents were not published by Kyiv. The dispute has fed the prejudice felt by many Poles towards Ukrainian refugees. A CBOS poll published in July found that for the first time a majority of Poles, 52 per cent, oppose their country accepting Ukrainian refugees.

Hate crimes against Ukrainians in Poland, including serious assaults, have escalated this year: the Polish National Police headquarters recorded 180 hate crimes against Ukrainians in the first six months of the year, against a total of 275 similar reports in the whole of 2025.

Meanwhile, Russia has been quick to weaponise the dispute to antagonise the allies further. In July, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported that Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) was intensifying disinformation efforts around the massacres, publishing false "declassified documents" stating that the scale of the massacres in 1943 were worse than previously thought. One recent bogus Russian report referred to the murder of 11 Polish priests in the town of Volodymyr.

While the issue has been exploited by politicians on both sides, there is no question of the scale and brutality of the massacres. Nor is UPA's role in the killings. The massacres at Ostrowki and Wola Ostrowiecka typified the brutality of the UPA.

At dawn on August 30, 1943, an UPA battalion commanded by Ivan Klymchak cordoned off the villages and separated men from women. By the time his men left that afternoon, 1,050 Poles were dead. Many of the women and children had been burnt to death in a school

and a barn torched by the UPA; others were shot. The men had been forced to lie in pits, their skulls smashed with cattle mallets and hatchets.

Among the few survivors was Helena Szwed, whose father and extended family were murdered. In 1958 she had a son, Leon Popek, who became a historian at Poland's Institute of National Remembrance, dedicating decades of his life to investigating the massacres.

Popek, who led the Polish team on this summer's exhumations, discovered his grandfather's remains on his first dig in 1992. He was identified by a small crucifix that his mother recognised.

"Reconciliation is not possible without a shared historical truth," he said at the funeral, where he carried the coffin of an unknown woman. "But it's not only my work that has allowed us to have this funeral. We are here due to the help and work of a lot of people, Ukrainians born here. I understand that we have done a good job with this step, but we still have 300 more people to find, and thousands of other Poles who need to be exhumed."

However, Ukrainians whose families suffered at the hands of Poles in the Second World War feel that their experience is overlooked by Warsaw, in the same way that the UPA's bloody history is overlooked by Kyiv.

The Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv has compiled a list of 28,451 Ukrainians who were killed during Ukrainian-Polish violence in the war.

Halyna Romaniuk, an 82-year-old Ukrainian, cried on Sunday as she recounted the escape of her husband Dmytro, a boy of six at the time, from a Polish massacre of Ukrainians in a nearby village in 1944. His mother and infant brother were bayoneted in their home as Dmytro hid in the cellar. His grandfather was burnt alive.

"We feel no equality or fairness in this," Romaniuk said, as Polish dignitaries arrived for the funeral. "It is talked of as if it is only Poles who were the victims. Did we not suffer enough?"

Ukrainian historians acknowledge the greater scale of Polish victims, but emphasise that politicisation of the massacres will hinder reconciliation.

"The problem is not about differences in events, it is about our different interpretations of those events," said Professor Oksana Kalishchuk, doctor of historical sciences at Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University in Lutsk, Ukraine. "Politicians have taken this issue and use it for political points for re-election, but we have to reconcile. We won't survive if we don't. Ukraine and Poland have a joint enemy: Russia."

The ghosts of the war pressed close as Solodukha considered today's struggle. "I gave the life of my only son to this war," she said. "Every man in my family is a soldier. We are giving all we can. We do not need to be blamed by those we also defend, for events that happened long before we were born."

Sanctions and strikes leave Iran in dire straits
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Pistol in lake could be clue to cold-case murder
Page 26

buried for 80 years

TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER JACK HILL

Left: Leon Popek, right, and Karol Polejowski, centre, at the ceremony at the Polish cemetery in Ostrivky. The remains of Colonel Yevhen Konovalets, founder of the OUN, were reburied with full military honours, top right and middle. Victims of the massacre being exhumed

US military sees the light over laser weapons

United States
Michael Evans

The drones were seen flying low near the Rio Grande Valley in Texas last week when the Locust shot them from the sky.

It was the first time the US army had used its laser weapon in anger, destroying targets that it claimed were flying in support of Mexican drug cartels.

While the idea of high-energy beams replacing surface-to-air missile interceptors was previously considered a science fiction fantasy, laser warfare is becoming a reality.

The Pentagon, led by Pete Hegseth, the secretary of war, is spending about $1 billion this year on developing a variety of "directed-energy" systems, and several are already operational after more than two decades of research. The relatively low cost of laser defences is the driving factor.

The Locust (low-cost UAV simulation testing) was recently sent to Texas to arm the 8,000-strong joint task force southern border with a "multipurpose high-energy laser". Built by AeroVironment, a defence company in Arlington, Virginia, the vehicle-mounted weapon is capable of firing 20-kilowatt beams that physically burns through targets.

"Neutralising threats at the speed of light" is how AeroVironment promotes the weapon, showing animated quadcopters tumbling from the sky.

The military did not reveal details about its use last week, or whether the drones were shot down over American or Mexican territory. But it said that the unmanned aircraft had presented "a physical threat" to US military and US Customs and Border Protection personnel. The US Marine Corps has acquired the same mobile Locust system for operational use against small drones and it has also been mounted on the aircraft carrier, USS George HW Bush, which conducted successful sea tests in October last year.

"Using directed-energy weapons, such as this, is part of the future of warfare, and it's better than us firing a $2 million missile at a [cheap] drone," a Pentagon official said.

The UK has a laser weapon called DragonFire which could be on Royal Navy warships by 2027. China has deployed a truck-mounted laser system and has put laser weapons on warships. Russia has a portable anti-drone laser weapon which has been tested in combat conditions. Israel's 100kW Iron Beam laser weapon is to have shot down drones launched by Hezbollah in Lebanon in the Middle East conflict.

For the Pentagon, which has used a large proportion of its most expensive weapon systems such as anti-missile and anti-drone interceptors in the war with Iran, the availability of directed-energy weapons has become a priority.

Instead of shooting down a $30,000 long-range armed drone with a multi-million-dollar top-end interceptor, one shot from a laser weapon could theoretically cost a few dollars. In its overview of the defence budget, the Department of War admitted "peer adversaries" had outpaced the US "kinetic weapon magazine depth and production capability with UAS [unmanned aerial systems], missiles and advanced sensors".

The Pentagon said: "As threat vectors evolve, directed-energy technologies redefine defence, delivering scalable precision and unmatched cost efficiency to secure the battlespace of tomorrow."

But the ambition is for more power of a kind that could take out a cruise missile, a large drone or anti-ship missile. The Pentagon's Scade CTA (scaled directed-energy critical technology areas) programme is aiming to develop a laser of 150 to 500kW in strength.

In May President Trump posted an AI-generated image of a warship painted with a US flag firing a laser at a drone with an Iranian flag, with the caption, "Lasers: Bing, Bing, GONE!!!", although there is no such confirmed use of the technology this year.

The potential for powerful laser beams to burn through fast-moving targets poses new challenges.

"One big problem is that weather patterns ... can affect the tracking and accuracy, and there's nothing you can do about that," said Mark Cancian, a former colonel who served three decades in the US Marine Corps and is a senior adviser to the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. "The other is power. The army has a mobile power system but the navy would face a greater demand ... to keep the laser stable over a longer period."

Army chief steps down

Keiran Southern

The US army secretary has resigned after 18 months in the job, the White House said, amid reports of tension with Pete Hegseth, the secretary of war.

Dan Driscoll, the civilian leader of the army, had repeatedly clashed with Hegseth, according to reports. The White House did not give a reason for Driscoll's departure on Monday. He is the latest senior military figure to leave as the armed forces' senior leadership is shaken up amid conflicts in Iran and Ukraine.

Anna Kelly, The White House spokeswoman, said: "Secretary Driscoll has been highly effective in advancing President Trump's agenda to Make America Strong Again at the department of the army by providing outstanding leadership during historic military operations, restoring an emphasis on readiness and lethality, assisting with negotiations between Russia and Ukraine, and more."

Moscow 'behind airport drone attack'

Germany
Oliver Moody Berlin

Germany has accused Moscow of mounting a drone attack last month on Leipzig airport and is preparing to close two Russian diplomatic institutions in retaliation.

Alexander Dobrindt, the interior minister, said Germany was being targeted with "daily hybrid warfare" and the botched attempt to blow up a Ukrainian transport aircraft was part of a broader pattern of harassment.

The quadcopter drone, carrying about 800g of pentyl, a nitroglycerine-like explosive, struck an An-124 Antonov cargo plane on the tarmac but failed to detonate. A few hours later, a Boeing 757 cargo plane from Marseille collided with another unidentified drone about 400m above the airport.

While the German authorities were swift to declare that the incidents on August 4 and 5 were "hybrid" attacks, they were reluctant to point the finger directly at the Kremlin until an initial investigation had concluded.

However, Dobrindt said that over the subsequent weeks "police investigations, the pattern of the crime and intelligence findings" had clearly indicated that a "low-level agent" acting for the Russian state was to blame.

Johann Wadephul, the German foreign minister, announced that the Russian consulate-general in Bonn would be closed on September 18 and the contract for Russia House, notionally a state institution for the promotion of Russian culture in Berlin, would be terminated. The Russian ambassador has also been summoned to the German foreign ministry for a démarche.

Wadephul said there would be further responses in the "intelligence domain" but did not elaborate.

Additionally, entry conditions for Russian citizens will be tightened and there will be further pressure on the Russian "shadow fleet" of poorly maintained tankers and cargo ships, in concert with Germany's EU partners.

"Our message to the Russian leadership is clear: we will not allow ourselves to be intimated or divided by Russia's attacks," Wadephul said.

The measures are likely to dovetail with attempts in Brussels to orchestrate an ambitious package of further sanctions against Russia, discussed at a summit of EU foreign ministers in Ireland yesterday.

World

Sanctions and strikes leave Iran's economy in dire straits

Iran
Samer Al-Atrush

The US is squeezing Iran's economy with sanctions while overseeing one of the world's biggest smuggling operations in which millions of barrels of oil are ferried past an Iranian blockade.

At night, a fleet of 60 tankers in the Strait of Hormuz switch off their transponders and even the crew's mobile phones. They hug the Omani coast as they sail into the Gulf of Oman while American jets shoot down any incoming Iranian missiles or drones.

Slowly, Iran is losing control of the strait, and its leverage in the six-month war with the United States. Coupled with a campaign of sanctions that Washington believes will isolate and possibly collapse Iran's economy, some in the US government — and allies in the region — believe the pressure could lead to regime collapse, or surrender.

Those hopes, analysts and officials say, may prove wrong again after the US and Israel launched the war in February believing that the regime could be toppled in weeks. But the renewed pressure may persuade the regime to return to the June ceasefire while possibly making concessions.

The regime has survived the war and become even more hawkish, while the country is in economic freefall: its currency, the rial, is trading at historic lows and inflation is above 80 per cent. Iranians queue for hours for petrol and bread, and the country is facing its worst unemployment crisis.

Officials have repeatedly called on people to ration petrol and electricity consumption and are contemplating new quotas. "We need to save gasoline," Mohammad Ghalibaf, the Speaker of the Iranian parliament, said yesterday.

"It is bad but it's not the kind of pressure that's going to lead to economic collapse," Ali Vaez, who heads the Iran project at the International Crisis Group, said. "It's almost impossible to bring the Iranian economy to the verge of collapse because you can't impose a hermetic seal of sanctions around Iran. It's a big country and it has experience in circumventing sanctions."

The pressure has brought into the open the disputes among the regime's camps, with relative pragmatists led by President Pezeshkian advocating for a renewed ceasefire that might salvage the country's economy. "It is better that we bring the war to an end now as we are in a position of power and dignity," Pezeshkian said last week.

Mojtaba Khamenei, the hardline supreme leader who succeeded his father after his assassination at the start of the war, called for unity but issued a stern warning to critics who have emphasised the economic crisis. "Weakness, defects and deficiencies do not require narration and highlighting; rather, they require planning and action to resolve ... the problem," he said in a statement.

Iran had brutally crushed an uprising in January that was triggered by the country's economic crisis, which predated the war that began a few weeks later. Another uprising would probably meet the same fate, analysts believe.

"A popular uprising by itself cannot succeed," Farzan Sabet, an Iran expert at the Geneva Graduate Institute, said. "It needs foreign military intervention. You had that last time but the foreign military intervention came too late."

But hardliners such as Khamenei, who believe they can extract more concessions from the US and recognition of Iran's claims to the strait, are on the back foot as they lose control over the waterway while the economy heads towards hyperinflation.

Energy experts had been slow to realise the scale of the US-led efforts to break Iran's chokehold on the strait, which before the war accounted for 20 million barrels a day in shipped oil. The transits were difficult to track, but the picture is of a significant amount of oil coming through the strait every day.

"The Iranians are doing what they can to disrupt the trade," said Gregory Brew, an expert on the oil trade and a senior analyst with the Eurasia Group.

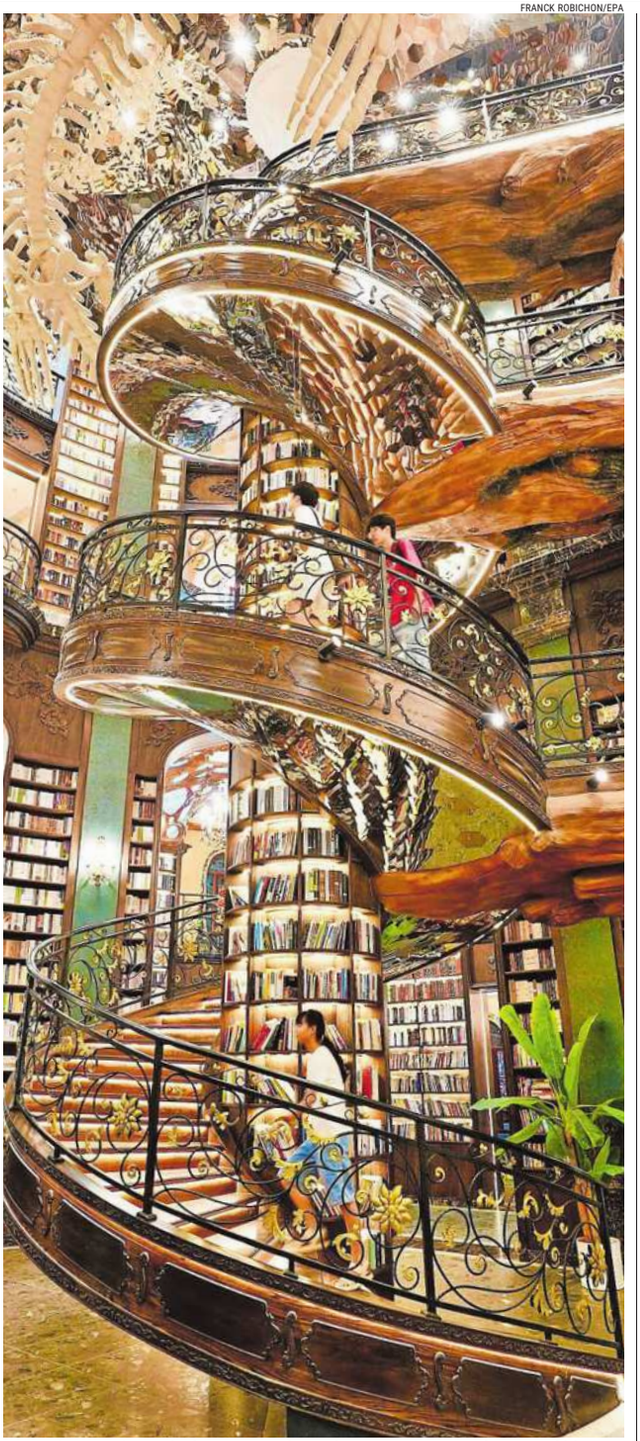
Fearing the loss of Hormuz, Iran has doubled down on targeting the ships by rebuilding its radar and missiles near the coast, with the US conducting airstrikes and contemplating another campaign to degrade Iran's capabilities.

"While I don't see the success of economic pressure leading to regime collapse, it's possible that should the economic pressure get sufficiently bad, it might empower one side of Iran's political spectrum ... for Iran to re-enter the memorandum of understanding likely under worse conditions," Sabet said.

Sanctions may not break regime, but could bend it, leading article, page 21

President Pezeshkian, left, and President Putin before a meeting on the sidelines of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

FRANCK ROBICHON/EPA



Doing the rounds **Books line a carved spiral staircase at a newly opened library created inside a natural sinkhole in Wuyuan county, Jiangxi province, China. The library has been compared to Hogwarts in the Harry Potter books**

Workaholic PM signals end to limits on overtime

Japan
Richard Lloyd Parry Tokyo

Japan's notoriously workaholic prime minister, Sanae Takaichi, is winding down a campaign to reduce excessive overtime, introduced to fight the country's deadly culture of overwork.

Businesses in Japan will no longer come under pressure from authorities to limit overtime to 45 hours a month. The change is intended to promote "flexible" working patterns in response to labour shortages caused by its shrinking population.

It is in keeping with the personal style of the Takaichi, who promised after being elected leader of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party that she would "work, work, work, work and work".

She added: "I have given up the idea of a 'work-life balance'." Even some of her supporters were shocked by her boast this year that she only sleeps "from zero to three hours a night".

The policy puts the brakes on efforts to reduce excessive overwork introduced in the past few years after a series of tragedies, involving what is known in Japan as *karoshi*, or death by overwork.

In 2013 a 31-year old TV reporter for Japan's state broadcaster died after working 159 hours of overtime. Miwa Sado, who worked for NHK, was found dead in her home in Tokyo, clutching her mobile phone. She had suffered a heart attack. News of her death was suppressed for three years, until her family insisted that it be made public to prevent similar tragedies.

In 2015, Matsuri Takahashi, 24, who worked for Dentsu, the world's biggest advertising agency, threw herself off her apartment building eight months after joining the firm. She had been working more than 100 hours of overtime a month. The publicity drove the government to clamp down on excessive working hours.

Much of the effort depends on "guidance" provided by the government that is not mandatory, but that companies find difficult to resist. Statutory working hours are eight hours a day, 40 hours a week. Forty per cent of Japanese firms operate under labour management regulations that allow overtime up to 100 hours a month, although they had been "advised", in other words pressured, to keep it below 45 hours.

"This is an unacceptable shift away from, and abolition of, the policy that urged companies to shorten work hours," the National Confederation of Trade Unions in Tokyo said.

Hamas official held after Israeli raid

Israel
Gabrielle Weiniger

Israel says it has captured and arrested a senior Hamas intelligence official during a covert operation in Gaza City.

Binyamin Netanyahu said that Israeli forces and its internal security agency, Shin Bet, arrested the head of Hamas's own agency on Tuesday morning.

"I commend the Shin Bet and the IDF, who in a daring operation today arrested the head of Hamas's internal security apparatus near his home in Gaza," Netanyahu said.

Israel accuses the leader, who has not been officially named, of hiding and transporting hostages taken on October 7, 2023 and of attempting to rebuild Hamas's capabilities.

"My directive is clear: the State of Israel will continue to pursue all Hamas leaders and everyone who took part in the October 7 massacre," Netanyahu added.

The prime minister's confirmation comes after eyewitnesses reported Israeli airstrikes provided cover for an operation by gunmen to arrest the Hamas intelligence official.

Witnesses reported about a dozen strikes yesterday in western Gaza City, a Hamas stronghold, where the territory's civil defence agency said two children and a woman had been killed.

The official has been identified by Gaza sources as Moein Muhammad al-Arabid, the head of Hamas's internal security in the Gaza City district. He was reported to have been wounded and taken back to Israel.

Israel Katz, the Israeli defence minister, confirmed a senior Hamas member had been detained.

Initial reports stated that either an Israeli-backed Palestinian militia or an undercover Israeli unit carried out a raid, while the Israeli military carried out shelling and air and drone strikes on a crowded area in western Gaza City.

The gunmen reportedly arrived on motorbikes before capturing their target after a shootout. Unverified video published by Egyptian media showed a white van that was allegedly used in the operation driving away.

LISE ASERUD, JAVAD PARSA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; CLAUDIA GRECO/REUTERS

King Haakon at the Storting with his daughter, Crown Princess Ingrid Alexandra, who took the place of Queen Mette-Marit, below

Princess stands in for ill new queen

The new queen of Norway, Mette-Marit, missed her husband King Haakon's swearing-in ceremony because of complications after her recent lung transplant (Oliver Moody writes).

Haakon VIII, 53, ascended to the throne on Friday with the death of his father, Harald V, but his reign was formally inaugurated with an oath to uphold the constitution in the Norwegian parliament, known as the Storting, on Tuesday.

However, Mette-Marit, 53, his queen consort, was unable to attend after she was put under medical observation. She received a new pair of lungs in June as her pulmonary fibrosis, a degenerative respiratory condition, worsened to the point where it was deemed to be life-threatening.

Her place was taken by Crown Princess Ingrid Alexandra, 22, who stood by her father's side as he took the oath. She also took an oath of her own, in writing, at the Royal Palace.

If she ascends to the throne, the crown princess will be Norway's first female reigning monarch in more than 600 years. She is the first to be affected by a change to succession laws in 1990, meaning that the throne is inherited by the eldest child, rather than the eldest male heir. The king will now be able to delegate duties to her.

Professor Are Martin Holm, the consultant pulmonologist at Norway's national hospital in Oslo, who is overseeing the queen's treatment, said complications were fairly common after such a procedure. These can include rejection, where the body's immune system turns on the transplanted organ, or infections that set in because the immune system has been suppressed.

The seriousness of these complications can vary greatly but Oslo University Hospital notes that they are usually treatable.

Holm said: "The queen has had complications on several occasions, including today. As a result, the queen must be observed throughout the day."

Masud Gharahkhani, the parliamentary Speaker, told NRK, Norway's national public broadcaster: "I know that our new queen really wanted to come, but she is in a rehabilitation phase and the family is in mourning. Everything that happened yesterday, with following [Harald's] bier to the royal palace chapel, has been tough."

Rise in childless couples points to failure of Meloni's family policies

Italy

Tom Kington Rome

Couples in Italy with children will be outnumbered by childless couples within 21 years, the country's statistics agency has warned, suggesting the prime minister's family friendly subsidies are not halting the country's demographic winter.

Researchers at the Istat agency reported there were 7.5 million couples with children in Italy last year, making up 28.1 per cent of households, but their number will fall to 5.8 million couples by 2050, down to just 21.1 per cent.

In the meantime, childless couples will rise from 5.4 million in 2025 to 5.9 million in 2050 or 21.4 per cent of total households, overtaking couples with children by 2047, Istat reported.

Over four years as prime minister, Giorgia Meloni has said ending Italy's falling birthrate is an existential emergency and has announced tax relief for mothers, but young couples continue to put off having children as they stay at home with their parents and struggle to secure decent jobs and mortgages.

"Surveys show that 70 per cent of Italians aged 10-19 want children and most of those would like two or more, but you need to get to 30 to find a decent job, wages are low and you need your parents to guarantee a mortgage," said Gigi De Palo, the head of the Italian Foundation for Births.

"The government's bonuses have not had a huge effect, and we also need a bigger change including banks giving more mortgages to the young," he added.

EU money has helped Italy open more public nursery schools, but in Rome they still only cater to 42 per cent of children, leaving working mothers paying for private nursery schools.

When it counts childless families, the EU uses different measuring yardsticks to Italy, counting childless households rather than couples, and only counting children up to 18 whereas Istat includes children right up until they leave home.

EU data shows, overall, 76.7 per cent of households had no children under 18 in 2025 in the bloc, rising to 81.8 per cent in Finland. The UK figure last year was 74 per cent.

In Italy, Istat said the Italian population as a whole will drop from 58.9 million last year to 45.8 million by 2080.

The decline will be worse in the south of the country with a fall of more than a third from 19.7 million to 12.3 million over the period.

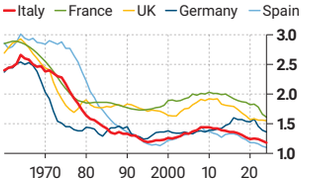
Istat said that as Italy's population ages, the over-65s will make up 36.8 per cent of the population by 2080, far outnumbering the under-15s who will make up just 10 per cent.

Last year, births totalled 355,000, the lowest number since Italy's unification in 1861. Experts claim the decline dates back to the 1980s, when Italy's postwar boom began to fade and Italians stopped viewing children as future earners and began to see them as a cost.

"Italy is changing and our forecast should come as no surprise," an Istat researcher said.

Falling birth rates

Total fertility rate, selected countries



Total fertility rate = Live births per woman

Source: World Bank

Le Pen pledges vote to ban wearing headscarves in public

France

Charles Bremner Paris

A pledge to ban women wearing Muslim headscarves in public has been revived by Marine Le Pen, the hard-right leader and frontrunner to become France's next president.

The move has underlined a shift back to the core doctrines of her National Rally party since an appeal court verdict in July enabled her to contest next year's election.

"I will submit to the French people, by referendum, a bill to combat Islamist ideologies with numerous powerful measures, including the banning of the Islamist headscarf in public spaces," Le Pen wrote on X.

Le Pen, 58, has promised since 2012, the first of her three unsuccessful presidential campaigns, to outlaw head coverings by Muslim women anywhere in public. However, she had recently backed away from the pledge as she campaigned to detoxify the former National Front and bring it closer to the conservative mainstream.

Jordan Bardella, her 30-year-old lieutenant who would have taken over the presidential candidacy if she had been barred by the courts, has taken a more moderate line, along with other figures in the party.

On Sunday, Jean-Philippe Tanguy, an MP and Le Pen ally, said the party had now fixed its position. "The headscarf is out of control in France," he said. "If there are women wearing it when it is banned, they will be fined like people who don't wear seatbelts in a car. Behind this symbol, it is not a freedom of dress, it is an ideology that runs counter to what France has stood for for years."

Public support for an extension of the existing French ban on religious insignia and clothing in schools and in state public services has grown over the past decade. A CSA survey in March last year found that 69 per cent were in favour of banning Muslim head coverings in public, with 31 per cent opposed.

French tax to slow rise of fast fashion

Adam Sage Paris

France has become the first country to impose a tax on fast fashion with a levy that ranges from 50 cents on underpants to €12 on a coat.

The tax has been designed to hit Chinese companies such as Shein, Temu and AliExpress but not European firms such as Ireland's Primark, Spain's Zara or France's Kiabi.

Ministers said the levy was intended to protect the environment and France's textile sector, which is in decline faced with Chinese competition. The measure is part of a wider law designed to fight the "ultra" fast-fashion industry

Serge Papin, the trade minister, said: "France is the first country in the world to implement this sort of measure. Ultra fast-fashion will now pay the true price for the damage it causes to the environment, to our businesses and to our regions. It is a useful fight."

The tax is based on a complex formula that takes account of the size of clothes retailers' product selection and how likely purchasers are to repair garments in the event of wear or tear.

Officials say the bigger the range and the cheaper the clothes, the more customers are incited to throw them away and buy new ones. Shein, for instance, has 1.7 million items of clothing for sale, including many below €10. Zara, on the other hand, has about 20,000 items. The tax will rise annually to reach €2 on underpants or socks, €3.50 on a T-shirt, €17.25 on jeans, €9.25 on a dress and €19.50 on a coat in 2030.

China's commerce ministry has described the tax as discriminatory and a trade barrier.

World

Children held in care can visit 'off-grid' parents

Italy
Tom Kington Rome

A British-Australian couple living off grid in Italy whose three children were seized and placed in care for ten months have been told by a court they can spend time with them.

Nathan Trevallion, 52, a former chef, and Catherine Birmingham, 46, an Australian horse rider, will be able to see their children daily and host them at weekends from next month under a gradual reintegration monitored by social services.

Their lawyer, Simone Pillon, said they would fight for full-time custody. "The children may now visit their parents but remain in care, which violates European, UN and Italian parents' rights," he said.

It marks a new twist in a case that has inflamed public opinion in Italy and pitched judges against Giorgia Meloni, the prime minister, who wants the family reunited.

In 2021 the couple moved with Utopia Rose, nine, and Bluebell and Galorian, seven-year-old twins, to a cottage in the Abruzzo woods with no running water, no electricity and a pit toilet. When they were taken to hospital with mushroom poisoning, the authorities put the children in care, claiming they needed to go to school and live in a home with modern plumbing.

Thousands of Italians signed a petition to reunite the family as Birmingham claimed her children were in "torturous" conditions in care.

Meloni has said: "Children are not of the state, they are of a mother and father, and a state that tries to substitute them has forgotten its limits."

The couple have now agreed to send the children to school and have moved into a small house with running water offered by the local council after they promised to upgrade their own home. "It should take four to five months," said Giuseppe Masciulli, mayor of Palmoli, the local town.

"I am surprised by the ruling, partly because it took so long and partly because the parents satisfied the judge's demands on housing and schooling, yet the children have to stay in care for now," he said. "Even the court-appointed expert recommended the kids go home."

GILBERT FLORES/VARIETY/GETTY IMAGES

Under their spell **Maisie Williams, Nicole Kidman, Sandra Bullock and Joey King at the Practical Magic 2 premiere in Los Angeles**

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Pistol in lake could be clue to cold-case murder

France
Adam Sage Paris

Investigators working to resolve the killing of a British-Iraqi family in the French Alps are analysing a pistol found in a lake to determine whether it is the murder weapon.

A Luger was discovered by British tourists scuba diving in Lake Annecy near the campsite where the al-Hilli family stayed before they were shot at an isolated alpine beauty spot in 2012.

Forensic scientists believe that Saad al-Hilli, 50, his wife, Iqbal, 47, and his mother-in-law, Suhaila al-Allaf, 74, were shot with a 7.65mm Luger P06/29 of the sort issued to the Swiss army in the first half of the 20th century. The members of the family were found dead in their BMW at a clearing near the village of Chevaline overlooking Lake Annecy.

Sylvain Mollier, 45, a local man out on a cycle ride, was also killed.

Some French media claimed that the discovery of the Luger two metres under the surface offered hope of a breakthrough in one of France's best-known cold cases.

However, investigators are said to remain cautious after following numerous lines of inquiry over the past 14 years, all without success.

Prosecutors at a specialist cold case unit in the Paris region confirmed only that a Luger has been found, but declined to say whether it was a P06/29 model. They said analysis was under way to determine if it was linked to the murders.

Judge Sabine Khéris, the investigating magistrate heading the inquiry, who specialises in cold cases, has told all the country's police forces she wants to be informed whenever they come across a Luger P06. If the model matches the murder weapon, scientists are likely to try to determine whether the handgrip is broken. Fragments of the red handgrip of the pistol used to kill the al-Hillis were discovered at the crime scene. Ballistics experts may also be able to say if it fired the 21 bullets found at the crime scene, 17 of which hit the victims.

Investigators would want to work out how long the pistol had been in the water. Its serial number could offer new clues. Any DNA recovered from the weapon would almost certainly be degraded, although forensic scientists believe there is an outside chance that it might be usable.

Saad al-Hilli, below, and his family were attacked in their car in 2012

The Luger was found close to Le Solitaire du Lac campsite, where the family from Claygate in Surrey were staying. Zainab, the al-Hillis' daughter, then seven, was shot in the shoulder and hit with the pistol but survived. Zeena, her sister, then four, escaped unhurt after sheltering under her dead mother's skirt in the back seat of the car.

Among the lines of inquiry explored by investigators was an act of revenge related to a family dispute, or an attack linked to Saad al-Hilli's work in satellite technology. Police found no evidence to support either theory.

Officers also worked on a line that the killer's target was Mollier, a cycling enthusiast who worked for a branch of Areva, the French nuclear group, renamed Orano in 2018. Again, inquiries came to nothing. Another theory is that they fell victim to a random attack. A report by a firearms expert suggested that the killings had been carried out by someone with specialist military training who "went off the rails".

Police are also said to have investigated a Danish tourist who stayed in the same campsite as the al-Hillis and left on the day of their deaths. A year earlier, the Dane had been camping a dozen or so kilometres from the scene of another murder in France.

A businessman from Lyon in central France, seen riding a motorbike in the vicinity of the crime scene, was questioned twice, in 2015 and 2022. But prosecutors said they had ruled him out as a suspect too.

Khéris is among France's best known investigators, and reputed to be able to resolve cold cases that have flummoxed seasoned detectives. She has so far failed to make headway with the killings at Chevaline.

Business

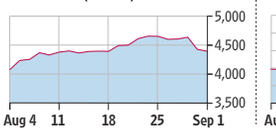
WORLD MARKETS (Change on the day)

FTSE 100
10,789.28 (-34.98)

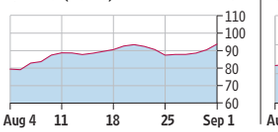
Dow Jones
52,766.88 (-419.02)

COMMODITIES

Gold
$4,393.91 (-36.95)

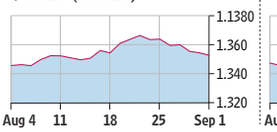


Brent crude (6pm)
$93.73 (+3.46)

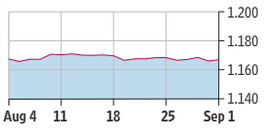


CURRENCIES

£/$
$1.3527 (-0.0020)



£/€
€1.1669 (-0.0011)



Return of tax-free shopping 'would give UK economy £11.5bn boost'

Modupe Omitola

The return of tax-free shopping for tourists would generate £11.5 billion in additional economic output, support more than 153,000 jobs across the UK and deliver a £2.6 billion net gain to the Treasury, according to a report.

The Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) said that restoring the VAT refund scheme for international visitors would attract up to 2.35 million more tourists to the UK each year and generate £4.1 billion in extra spending, boosting UK growth, employment and tax revenues. The scheme was scrapped in 2021 by the Conservative government.

International visitor numbers have broadly recovered since the Covid pandemic but visitor spending has lagged significantly behind, the CEBR report said. While overseas visits in 2024 were only 1.3 per cent below 2019 levels, real visitor expenditure remained 8.7 per cent lower than before the pandemic. Average spending per visit fell to £786 from £848.

Restoring tax-free shopping for tourists would have boosted GDP by £11.5 billion last year, the research commissioned for the Heart of London Business Alliance claimed.

London's West End is estimated to have lost £310 million in the first half of 2025 due to the scheme being axed, separate research last year concluded.

The new report said that over a year, London could have an extra £6.3 billion gross value added (GVA) — a measure of contribution to the wider economy — 65,500 jobs and 1.13 million visitors if tax-free shopping were reinstated.

The UK is the only major European country to have cut tax-free shopping, leaving it vulnerable to rivals such as France and Italy, whose recoveries in non-EU tourism were stronger.

Sir Sadiq Khan, the mayor of London, said: "The decision to remove tax-free shopping by the previous government was a huge mistake. The government should consider using the autumn budget to reinstate it."

All regions would reap economic benefits, the CEBR report said. At the upper end, Scotland could generate £1.3 billion of additional GVA over a year and almost 22,000 jobs. Wales would receive about £172 million additional GVA and 3,300 jobs.

The Treasury said: "The chancellor will set out decisions at fiscal events, rather than routinely commenting on rumour, speculation or proposals."

Global bond sales drive up debt cost

UK gilt yields at highest since 2008 crisis

Jack Barnett
Economics Correspondent

UK government borrowing costs climbed to an 18-year high yesterday amid a global bond sell-off that pushed long-term yields to multi-decade peaks after the United States and Iran traded strikes for the first time since July, feeding anxieties over rising inflation and interest rates.

The yield on the benchmark ten-year UK government bond rose as much as 0.18 percentage points to 5.254 per cent, a level last reached during the 2008 financial crisis.

The yield on the 30-year UK bond hit 5.903 per cent, up by 0.11 percentage points, its highest point since 1998.

The latest surge in gilt yields comes as investors' focus turns to Andy Burnham and John Healey's first budget on October 28.

Speculation about tax rises, spending cuts or more borrowing has grown after economists warned that the war in the Middle East and rise in bond yields has reduced the UK's near-£24 billion of fiscal headroom by as much as half.

Kathleen Brooks, research director at XTB, said: "The UK is well used to pockets of gilt market volatility, but [the] massive jump in yields could sting for the chancellor and the prime minister."

Yields, which move inversely to prices, rose after the US and Iran attacked each other at the weekend, pushing up the price of a barrel of Brent crude, the international oil price benchmark, by more than 2 per cent to $92.36.

Gold prices dropped by 1.89 per cent to $4,364 per ounce, probably due to government bonds offering a more attractive rate of return. European gas prices, to which Britain is heavily exposed, were trading at their highest level in three and a half years.

French and German bond yields were also higher, rising by as much as 0.05 percentage points to 4.227 per cent and 0.04 percentage points to 3.364 per cent respectively, after new data revealed that inflation in the eurozone climbed to a three-year high of 3.3 per cent, all but sealing an expected interest rate rise by the European Central Bank on September 10 to 2.5 per cent.

Persistent government borrowing in rich economies, central banks selling bonds purchased under quantitative easing programmes and rampant borrowing by technology firms to fund AI capital spending have also put upward pressure on global yields.

The sell-off in bonds lifted the yield on Japan's ten-year benchmark bond to 3 per cent for the first time since 1996, and the yield on the ten-year US Treasury, another benchmark, rose to 4.78 per cent, its highest since early 2025, after Kevin Warsh, chairman of the Federal Reserve, warned last week that price pressures remained "too high" and "concerning".

According to the CME Group's Fed Watch Tool, traders now believe there is a 66 per cent chance of a rate rise at the central bank's next meeting on September 16. Inflation has exceeded 3 per cent since March, peaking at 4.2 per

Continued on page 30

AMBLIN ENTERTAINMENT

Life through a lens The actress Daisy Edgar-Jones in Twisters, a 2024 film about storm chasers who photograph tornados with GoPro action cameras. The company has been bought by the optical parts maker Starman in a $285 million cash deal

London exits top $100bn this year

Helen Cahill
Financial Correspondent

The London stock market is set to lose another three companies after boards announced a trio of transactions amid a wave of dealmaking worth more than $100 billion.

Bodycote, Gamma Communications and Capricorn Energy have all recommended shareholders back takeover offers as private equity firms and overseas investors continue to show strong interest in London's listed companies.

Bodycote's board has been fielding interest from a number of private equity firms over the summer. It has now agreed a deal with Veritas Capital after the company increased its offer to 940p per share, valuing the group at about £1.7 billion.

Shares in Bodycote rose 42p, or 4.6 per cent, to close at 955p, above the offer price. The company was founded in 1923 as a textile business but is now a provider of heat treatment and specialist metallurgical technologies.

Gamma Communications, a telecommunications company, agreed a £1.02 billion takeover by Epiris, a British private equity firm. Gamma shares rose 16p, or 1.4 per cent, to close at £11.56, above the £11.20-a-share cash offer.

Meanwhile, Capricorn Energy, the oil and gas group based in Edinburgh, recommended a $396 million takeover from the Kurdistan-focused Norwegian oil and gas operator DNO, which trumped an earlier offer from a rival, Genel Energy.

Shares in Capricorn Energy closed up 35p, or 10.2 per cent, at 378p.

The bids are part of an increase in offers so far this year that are now worth $104 billion, according to data from AJ Bell, more than double last year's total of $41.6 billion. It comes after takeover offers for Schroders, Beazley, easyJet and Segro.

Henrik Persson, head of public mergers and acquisitions at Cavendish, the British investment bank, said it was "bittersweet when companies leave the market, but it also underlines that London still has some fantastic businesses to invest in".

Full reports, page 33

Need to know

1 The London stock market is set to lose another three companies after boards announced a trio of transactions, amid a wave of dealmaking worth more than $100 billion so far this year. Bodycote, Gamma Communications and Capricorn Energy have all recommended takeover offers as private equity firms and overseas investors continue to show strong interest in London's listed companies. Pages 27, 33

2 The reintroduction of tax-free shopping for tourists would generate £11.5 billion in additional economic output, support more than 153,000 jobs across the UK and deliver a £2.6 billion net gain to the Treasury, a report from the Centre for Economics and Business Research claims. Page 27

3 UK government borrowing costs climbed to an 18-year high amid a global bond sell-off that pushed long-term yields to multi-decade peaks after the United States and Iran traded strikes again. Page 27

4 A jury in the US has sided with Reckitt Benckiser's baby milk unit Mead Johnson in a long-running case over the formula milk Enfamil's alleged links to potentially fatal bowel disease in premature babies.

5 Mike Ashley's Frasers Group has put a question mark over its support for the chairman of Hugo Boss as it confirmed plans to take full control of the German luxury fashion house. Page 32

6 The fast-fashion seller Shein had a less than stellar debut after its long-awaited flotation in Hong Kong, underlining the pressures facing the sector as governments clamp down on ecommerce. Shares in the group initially fell as much as 10 per cent, before clawing back most of those losses to close down fractionally on its opening price. Page 32

7 The average UK house price edged up by 0.2 per cent month-on-month in August after a downwardly revised 0.1 per cent dip in July, Nationwide Building Society said. The average house price was £275,465. Page 36

"If Bessent really wants cheaper borrowing, he needs to use bazookas not pea-shooters

Mehreen Khan, page 31

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Next stop in race to make

THE TIMES
THE SPACE ECONOMY
PART 2

Data centres could be next into orbit, while mining asteroids may bring untold riches, **Rupert Neate** writes

It is famously "the final frontier" but space is fast becoming "the next frontier" for companies and investors looking for new growth opportunities.

The $1.8 trillion flotation of Elon Musk's SpaceX has focused minds on the economic potential of space but experts and investors tell The Times there are likely to be more opportunities among the stars than most people can yet imagine.

The possibilities, they say, extend from hyper-accurate satellite imagery of Earth to orbiting AI data centres, gravity-free pharmaceutical manufacturing labs and even rare earth mining on asteroids.

Up until now, human interest in space has been mostly focused on satellites. The Soviet Union launched the first, Sputnik 1, in 1957. By 2022 the number had increased to about 6,000. At the end of August this year about 18.700 active satellites were orbiting Earth (and 9,000 pieces of debris), according to Orbital Radar, an open space intelligence platform providing real-time tracking of satellites.

The European Space Agency expects that number to grow to about 100,000 satellites by 2030, raising concerns about the risk of collisions.

Israel Leyva Mayorga, head of the Space Tech Center at Aalborg University in Denmark, says: "There is always a risk of collisions. But that risk is going to increase significantly in the coming years. Today, satellites are critical infrastructure for our modern society on Earth. So failures can have consequences for climate monitoring, weather forecasting, navigation, disaster warning and everything else we use satellites for."

Launching new satellites is governed by a combination of international treaties overseen by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and domestic national laws. In the UK, operators must apply for a licence via the Civil Aviation Authority.

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) also regulates satellites by managing the global radio frequency spectrum they use and their orbital positions to prevent interference between different countries' space systems.

To ensure the finite spectrum resources are used, the ITU enforces a seven-year deadline for their use. If a satellite is not "brought into use" — placed in its assigned orbit and transmitting — within seven years of the initial filing, the regulatory rights expire.

Lewis Feilder, Deloitte UK's space expert, says our everyday lives are already aided by satellite technology.

"It may seem like Star Trek, but people are reliant on space to make some of our traffic light systems work, for the trains to move, for GPS navigation on your phone," he says. "And that's just some of the applications we know about. There are a lot more uses for companies, and even more for governments and militaries."

Rasmus Flytkjaer, head of the space team at the consultancy London Economics, says that satellite-based services will quickly become even more ubiquitous as the cost of sending more satellites into space plummets due to reusable rockets being developed by SpaceX and the Amazon founder and billionaire Jeff Bezos's Blue Origin.

"When I first started looking at space 15 years ago, satellites were really expensive and almost all government owned," Flytkjaer says.

"Now they are 100-fold cheaper and we have lower Earth orbit satellites which are much cheaper to make and launch and have a wider range of applications, including finally providing universal affordable broadband everywhere on Earth."

The importance of satellites for GPS, shipping and logistics cannot be overstated, Flytkjaer says. "The world is totally reliant on GPS. If it went down it could cost the world economy billions of dollars a day as so many businesses and services depend on it.

"Global shipping is totally dependent on it. Without it, you don't have any good options: you have to either stop, slow down, or take the risk of going the wrong way."

Flytkjaer says that once ships slow or stop, the knock-on effect to ports and just-in-time manufacturing would be quickly felt around the world.

"The impact of no GPS would be similar to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz or when the Ever Given container ship got stuck in the Suez Canal [in 2021]," he says.

While satellites will be the fastest-growing part of the space economy to start with, Flytkjaer says there are lots of other sectors that could follow.

The first of those is likely to be putting artificial intelligence data centres into orbit. Data centres on Earth are very power and water hungry and often not welcomed by their neighbours. In space, there's ubiquitous solar power, a lot of space (naturally) to place them, and no locals to object to planning applications.

Further into the future, Flytkjaer envisages a tourism industry and some specialist manufacturing taking place in space, particularly in pharmaceuticals and life sciences, where the absence of gravity could help with new discoveries. And then there is the possibility of mining asteroids, some of which are thought to be full of very valuable metals, minerals and rare earth elements.

There are an estimated 1.1 million to 1.9 million asteroids in the main asteroid belt between Jupiter and Mars, according to Nasa.

They vary in size from Vesta, the largest asteroid at 329 miles in diameter, to much smaller asteroids

Mining disaster claimants deal new blow to law firm

Jonathan Ames Legal Editor

Brazilian claimants in Britain's largest group legal action have ditched a controversial City law firm in favour of the London offices of two US practices.

Partners at Bailey Glasser said that it now represented the "vast majority" of what was estimated to be up to 400,000 claimants in the Mariana dam disaster litigation, with additional support coming from Hausfeld.

The move to take over the claim in the High Court in London from Pogust Goodhead — which the lawyers have valued as being in "the billions" — is a further blow to the firm, which The Times reported last November fell out with its flamboyant founder amid allegations that litigation funding cash was spent on private jets and yachts in South America.

Bailey Glasser, which has its headquarters in West Virginia with offices in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles, said it was taking over the representation of all the indigenous and Quilombola claimants in the litigation. The move was said to have come after discussions between the so-called client committee and Pogust Goodhead on the future conduct of the case.

The claim relates to the collapse in 2015 of the Mariana dam in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais, which was said to have unleashed 40 million cubic metres of toxic waste, destroying villages and polluting 400 miles of waterways along the River Doce.

BHP, the world's biggest mining company, and its joint-venture partner were the owners of the dam and were originally sued by more than 620,000 claimants in the High Court. But since that litigation started, many claimants have dropped out after agreeing to compensation offers under a scheme overseen by the Brazilian government.

Last year a London judge ruled that negligence on the part of BHP had triggered the disaster, with the company announcing minutes after that judgment that it would appeal. In the meantime, a trial to assess the amount of damages due to the claimants was separately scheduled to begin next month and was predicted to run until 2028.

In its statement, Bailey Glasser said the client committee "feels now is the right time to appoint new representatives" and added that "they would like to acknowledge the work done by Pogust Goodhead in bringing the case to the High Court in London and achieving the landmark victory on liability".

The client committee's decision to ditch Pogust Goodhead came weeks after the English firm announced that it had done a deal with the litigation funding company Gramercy for $150 million (£110 million) in backing for the dam litigation. That funding came in addition to an initial $85 million for the litigation so far.

Pogust Goodhead said the Brazilian clients could lose their no win, no fee insurance cover against any potential costs order if they went ahead with the move to the US firm. "That insurance was arranged on the basis that Pogust Goodhead acts for the claimants in these proceedings," it said, adding that such changes risked "placing claimants' costs protection in jeopardy".

A spokeswoman said that as of yesterday, Pogust Goodhead "remains the solicitor of record and continues to act in claimants' best interests".

Last year The Times revealed that the firm had sacked its high-profile founder, the barrister Thomas Goodhead, after an internal investigation found that investment funds intended for litigation were spent on private jets and parties on yachts. Goodhead has consistently denied any wrongdoing.

a fortune in space

BRANDON BELL//AP

Elon Musk holds court with President Trump at the launch of a SpaceX rocket, right; Jeff Bezos toasts his Blue Origin space flight, above

that are less than 33ft across. Nasa divides asteroids, which are rocky remnants left over from the formation of our solar system about 4.6 billion years ago, into three groups.

The C-type (chondrite) asteroids are most common. They probably consist of clay and silicate rocks and are dark in appearance. The S-types ("stony") are made up of silicate materials and nickel-iron. The M-types are metallic (nickel-iron): their composition varies depending on how far from the sun they formed.

It is these M-type asteroids that are of most interest to scientists and investors. Preliminary spectroscopy of asteroids — which measures the sunlight they reflect or the thermal light they emit at different wavelengths to reveal their surface composition — suggests that some asteroids may contain large quantities of metals and rare earth elements that are valuable and hard to find on Earth.

One single asteroid, 16 Psyche, which is about 230 million miles from Earth and measures 140 miles in diameter, could contain metals worth about $10,000 quadrillion (or $10 million trillion), compared with the world's economy of about $142 trillion.

In October 2023 Nasa launched a spacecraft to examine Psyche. It will arrive in Psyche's orbit in August 2029 and spend two years orbiting the asteroid, taking pictures and mapping to determine its composition.

"There are asteroids that we think are full of platinum, gold and diamonds. There are also isotopes needed for nuclear fusion that are not really available on Earth," Flytkjaer says. "The problem is how to get those things back to Earth."

TOMORROW

The European alternative to Elon Musk and Starlink

Reckitt wins baby milk court battle

Simon Freeman Business News Editor

A jury in the US has sided with Reckitt Benckiser's baby milk unit Mead Johnson in a long-running case over the formula milk Enfamil's alleged links to potentially fatal bowel disease in premature babies.

Shares in the consumer goods group rose as much as 5 per cent yesterday after the unanimous jury verdict in the court for the Northern District of Illinois. It was the first bellwether case against Mead Johnson tried in a federal court and follows a series of legal judgments that have concluded in its favour.

The jury dismissed allegations that the formula increased the risk of Alexis Inman's infant son Daniel developing necrotising enterocolitis (NEC) and that doctors were not properly warned of any potential risk. According to court records, Daniel was born prematurely in 2020 at 29 weeks and weighed less than two pounds. He initially received his mother's breast milk before being fed Enfamil Premature, a cow's milk-based formula. He developed NEC and died in hospital.

In a statement, Reckitt said: "We continue to offer our deepest condolences to Ms Inman and her family.

"The verdict affirms Mead Johnson's view that the science doesn't support the claims here or in the litigation more broadly. We strongly reject any assertion that any of our products cause NEC, and we will continue to vigorously defend ourselves against all such claims in the interest of safeguarding the health of premature babies."

The decision means that there are no outstanding jury verdicts in the overall NEC litigation against Mead Johnson, Reckitt said. The Slough-based consumer products group bought Mead Johnson for $16.6 billion in 2017 and has been considering a sale to focus on core brands. Last year, it sold a majority stake in its Essential Home business, which includes Cillit Bang and Air Wick, to the private equity firm Advent for $4.8 billion.

Analysts at JP Morgan upgraded their rating on the stock to "overweight" from "neutral" in light of the ruling, saying the focus should be on the core business. Abbott Healthcare, a US-based rival, reached a $670 million settlement last month to partially resolve NEC litigation. Celine Pannuti, a JP Morgan analyst, said: "We see rising prospects for resolution on NEC litigation following Abbott's partial settlement of some NEC cases."

The ruling could help pave the way to a sale. France's Danone is among those reported to be considering buying the business. Shares in Reckitt, which are down almost a fifth this year as the claims weighed, closed up 4.4 per cent, or 228p, at £53.60.

Price isn't right on London markets

BUSINESS COMMENTARY *Alistair Osborne*

Proof you can't keep a good idea down. The BBC stopped broadcasting *Flog It!* in 2020. But then along came David Schwimmer, the chief executive of London Stock Exchange Group, to reformat things for the financial markets.

What an arena he's provided, too, for people to get shot of their "unwanted collectables", to borrow a phrase from the Beeb's programme. They're being knocked out at such a rate that, so far this year, the UK public markets have seen more than $100 billion-worth of takeovers — $104 billion on AJ Bell figures. After Beazley and Schroders earlier this year, the summer sales have proved a right bonanza for largely foreign or private equity raiders, snapping up everything from 100-year plus antiques (Segro, Tate & Lyle, Intertek) to relative newbies like easyJet and DCC. This week's started with three more agreed deals, together worth about £3 billion, for Bodycote, Gamma Communications and Capricorn Energy (more of which below).

True, any company listed on the UK market is by definition up for sale. And, to an extent, Patrick Sarch, head of UK public M&A at law firm White and Case, is right: "While there are concerns about what continued foreign takeovers mean for the future of UK public markets, we view this as welcome inbound investment into our open economy from buyers who see opportunities to unlock greater value under private ownership. An absence of international demand would be far worse."

Yet, as he also notes, the deals do highlight one big problem with the London market: that, despite it being close to record highs, UK listed companies are "continuing to trade at persistent discounts to their international peers". There are lots of other issues, too. They span five years of outflows from UK funds, with the London market now down to 3.5 per cent of the MSCI World Index; the internationalisation of boards and investors, who aren't rooted to a London listing; and the far better financial bets of late in America, whatever the risk of an AI bubble burst. The fact that the UK exchange counts for only a tiny chunk of Schwimmer's data-driven group probably doesn't help either.

From this comes the relentless mispricing of UK companies: KKR's £4.2 billion takeover of engineer Spectris last year at a vast 104.9 per cent premium being a prime example. Even so, as that deal proved, bidders can be forced to pay up. Take Bodycote, which uses heat treatment to harden metals for aerospace, defence, automotive and industrial clients. It's just agreed a £1.64 billion cash takeover from US private equity firm Veritas at 940p, including a 7.2p half-year dividend. The premium may only be 25.3 per cent. But the price is close to an all-time high — the shares briefly touched 964½p in August 2021. The board had signalled in May that 885p, plus the 16.1p final dividend, was the right sort of ballpark when it let in Apollo for due diligence — before it walked out. And, even now, Bodycote could yet get a top-up out of a rival suitor, CVC: something the market is hinting at, with the shares up 5 per cent to an above-bid 955p.

Bodycote is hardly going for a song. Sure, there is no quick fix for the London market, though axing 0.5 per cent stamp duty on share trading would help — even if both Labour and the Tories balk at the £3 billion-plus costs. And, arguably, the bigger problem is the dearth of floats to replace groups getting sold.

All the same, companies do have options: merging with UK-listed rivals, say, to beef up, rip out synergies and make themselves more investable, potentially becoming predator not prey. Better that than ending up on *Flog It!*

Plan D for Genel

You doubt this was Plan A. When the boss of Norway's DNO, Bijan Mossavar-Rahmani, proposed a £202 million cash bid for Genel Energy at 69p a share, many thought he'd made this sort of calculation. That Genel would get outbid in its £271 million pursuit of Capricorn Energy. And then, on the rebound, he'd snap up a weakened Genel: DNO's junior partner in the Tawke oil field in Kurdistan, where its 25 per cent stake is its only operating asset.

That morphed into Plan B when two other Capricorn bidders pulled out, leaving Genel with an agreed bid: the sort of diversification it had been looking for and all the more reason to rebuff DNO's offer. So, Mossavar-Rahmani has switched to what looks Plan C: gatecrashing Genel's offer with his own agreed bid for Capricorn at a 10 per cent premium. He's offered $396 million, or £292 million, at 384p per share.

Sure, there are cheaper ways to make Genel's life difficult than a bid for a company that takes DNO into a new operating area — Egypt. But, as the 7 per cent drop in Genel shares to 65¼p implied, its board, chaired by Patrick Allman-Ward, looks to have been totally outplayed. It's not only Panmure Liberum analysts who doubt "Genel will come back with a higher offer" for Capricorn, while Mossavar-Rahmani now has a potential new plan: dropping his proposed bid for Genel by Friday's put-up-or-shut-up deadline, hoping the shares crash and coming back in six months time, possibly at a lower price.

Yes, restarting exports from the Tawke field could change the maths and he'd still have to convince Genel's big four shareholders. Yet, he's put Genel over a bit of a barrel.

Burnham burnt

Even worse than Liz Truss. Andy Burnham has only been PM since July 20. And look at this: UK gilt yields are at an 18-year high, with the benchmark ten-year rising as much as 0.18 percentage points to 5.254 per cent. True, it's not exactly his fault: blame a global bond rout, mainly due to Trump's Iran excursion. But this is not the budget backdrop Burnham wants.

alistair.osborne@thetimes.co.uk

Business

Investors are strikingly tough on UK but they have reason to be…

Jack Barnett Economics Correspondent

Since the first US-Israeli strikes on Iran more than six months ago, Britain has tended to experience wilder swings in its government borrowing costs than Europe and America.

That trend continued yesterday as the yield on the benchmark ten-year UK government bond, or gilt, rose as much as 0.18 percentage points to 5.254 per cent, an 18-year high, compared with a rise of 0.04 percentage points on the German equivalent, seen as a barometer for general European borrowing costs, to 3.364 per cent. The yield on the French ten-year government bond jumped by 0.05 percentage points to 4.227 per cent. Italy registered a 0.07 point increase to 4.222 per cent.

That smaller rise in European yields came on a day when new Eurostat data showed inflation in the common currency area hit a three-year high of 3.3 per cent in August. It is widely believed that the European Central Bank will raise its main deposit rate on September 10 for the second time this year, taking it to 2.5 per cent.

Some of the rise in UK yields would have been a catch-up effect because UK financial markets were shut on Monday for the August bank holiday, although the increase yesterday alone was larger than the two-day rise in French and German bond yields, so there is clearly something idiosyncratic about Britain's debt.

The picture in long-term debt markets is much more sobering. The yield on the 30-year UK gilt soared to its steepest point since the late 1990s, a touch below 6 per cent — it did not reach that level even during Liz Truss's ill-fated premiership four years ago. Japan's long-term debt yields are trading at similarly historic levels.

Britain is uniquely positioned to suffer to a greater degree from inflation that is caused by a rise in global oil and gas prices because it is heavily reliant on energy imports.

When there is a flare-up in the Middle East war, investors believe that the UK will be punished with higher inflation. In response, they demand a higher yield to buy UK debt to compensate them for the expected rise in prices and in anticipation of coming interest rate increases by the Bank of England to tame inflation.

So far this year, the Bank has held off from rate increases on the basis that the rise in UK yields would effectively cool the economy anyway, so a further tightening of monetary policy would only heap unnecessary pressure on households and businesses.

However, with inflation on course to remain at about 3 per cent for the rest of the year, the very live risk that the continuing war in the Gulf pushes it above that level, and the fact that the Bank has not hit its 2 per cent inflation target in two years, investors are starting to expect rates to rise.

Add into that mix Andy Burnham and John Healey's first budget in October — both of whom have promised to follow the UK's fiscal rules while tackling the cost of living — and there are plenty of reasons for investors to get rid of UK government debt and put their money elsewhere.

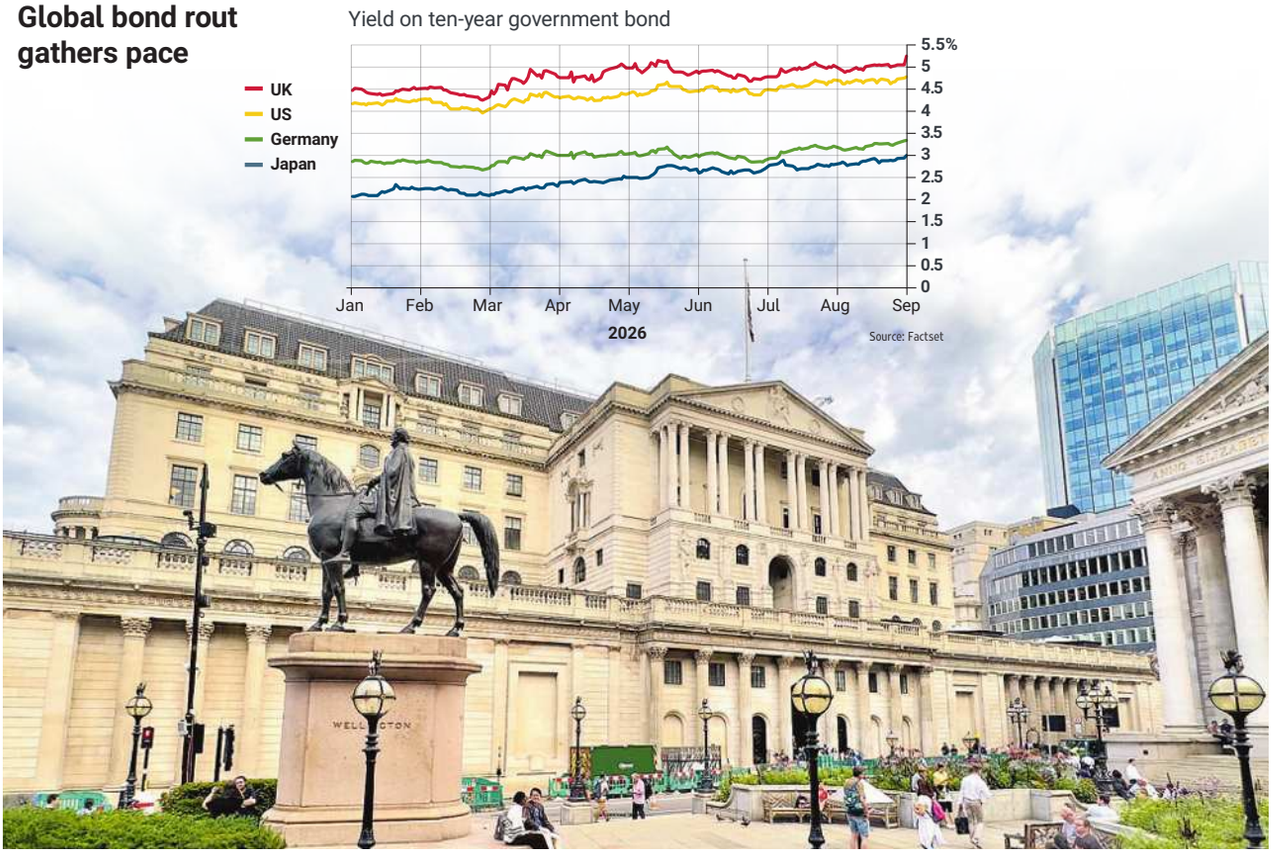
Nonetheless, this bond sell-off truly is a global phenomenon with multifaceted causes.

According to analysts, it has been driven by: persistently high government borrowing which has markets awash with fresh bond supply, public debt closing in on record highs (particularly in the US where it is now over $40 trillion), central banks offloading bonds bought under their quantitative easing programmes, stubborn inflation made worse by the Gulf conflict, and technology firms crowding out public bond markets with their own bonds to splurge on AI infrastructure.

There is probably only one of those drivers that does not feasibly have a long-term horizon, the war in the Middle East, which could be ended overnight if Washington and Tehran wanted to.

With that decision left to the whims of an erratic at best and dangerous at worst Trump administration and the despotic Iranian regime, it is no wonder bond investors are not holding their breath.

Global bond rout gathers pace



… and it's not the only country to suffer

The yield on Japan's benchmark ten-year government bond exceeded 3 per cent for the first time in more than three decades yesterday (Jack Barnett writes).

It comes amid growing pressure on the country's central bank to raise interest rates and concerns about a sharp rise in government spending at a time of elevated debt.

The milestone was reached amid a global bond rout that saw yields on government debt in the world's largest economies hit multi-decade highs, fuelled by investor anxieties about stubborn inflation after the US and Iran traded strikes in the Gulf for the first time since July.

Japanese yields were pushed higher after domestic media reported that some government departments and agencies had requested the largest spending budgets on record for the next fiscal year at a time of sky-high public debt.

A sharp fall in the value of the yen, despite a joint intervention in foreign exchange markets alongside the US Treasury, has raised investor expectations for faster or more interest rate rises by the Bank of Japan to prop up the currency and curb inflation caused by higher import prices due to the weaker yen.

After years of suffering from deflation, prices are rising relatively rapidly in Japan, in part driven by the jump in oil and gas prices caused by the Gulf conflict. Like many of Asia's biggest economies, Japan is heavily dependent on energy imports from the region, which remain choked off due to the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Scott Bessent, the US Treasury secretary, told CNBC he believed that "the Japanese government and the [Bank of Japan] will do the things that will lead to a stronger yen".

Analysts at Capital Economics, a research consultancy, said: "The [Bank of Japan] will accelerate its tightening cycle to reduce lingering concerns about inflation risks."

Japan's prime minister, Sanae Takaichi, plans to dramatically increase government spending and deliver a consumption tax cut to lift household spending at a time when Japan's net debt-to-GDP ratio is well in excess of 100 per cent.

According to the IMF's World Economic Outlook, the Japanese economy is on track to grow by just 0.6 per cent this year and 0.7 per cent next year, having expanded by 1.1 per cent in 2025.

The dollar strengthened by 0.20 per cent against the yen to ¥160 and is up by more than 2 per cent this year.

Global bond sell-off drives up debt costs

Continued from page 27

cent in May, partly owing to the surge in petrol prices caused by the war in the Middle East.

"I think really most of this [bond] sell-off has been a re-assessment of Fed policy," Andrew Lilley, chief rates strategist at Barrenjoey, an investment bank in Sydney, said. "The Fed hikes in September and I think it's the beginning of the three-rate hike cycle at minimum."

The bond sell-off increased the challenges for Scott Bessent, the US Treasury secretary, who had introduced measures in an attempt to lower yields. These included a currency intervention of at least $10 billion to support the value of the yen against the dollar and a $4 billion buyback operation of Treasury bonds. Higher borrowing costs could also create problems for President Trump heading into the November midterm elections as voters grow increasingly agitated by a lack of progress on bringing down the cost of living.

Michiel Tukker, senior rates analyst at ING, the Dutch bank, said it did appear that growth in the US and elsewhere in the world was pushing up real yields. "Combine that with the deficit story, and a lot of supply [of debt] and you could argue that things don't look that stretched yet. Real rates are still on par or even a bit below pre-2008 levels," he said.

"There's no easy turnaround … and if you ask who will take the other side of this trade (ie betting yields will fall), that's difficult to see."

Mehreen Khan

US Treasury secretary is following Japanese playbook on bond market

Is the world economy heading into a new era of financial repression? One way to read the paroxysms in the bond market this summer is a revolt against government attempts to artificially suppress their borrowing costs and force investors to soak up the pain.

The traditional term for this massaging of borrowing costs through intervention is "financial repression". It was successfully executed by Britain and allied countries in the post-Second World War era to chip away at their record debt overhangs. The state of global indebtedness in the 2020s is on a par with that of the 1950s in the UK, US and Italy. In Japan, public debt to GDP has been above 200 per cent for 15 years. A dose of financial repression looks inevitable.

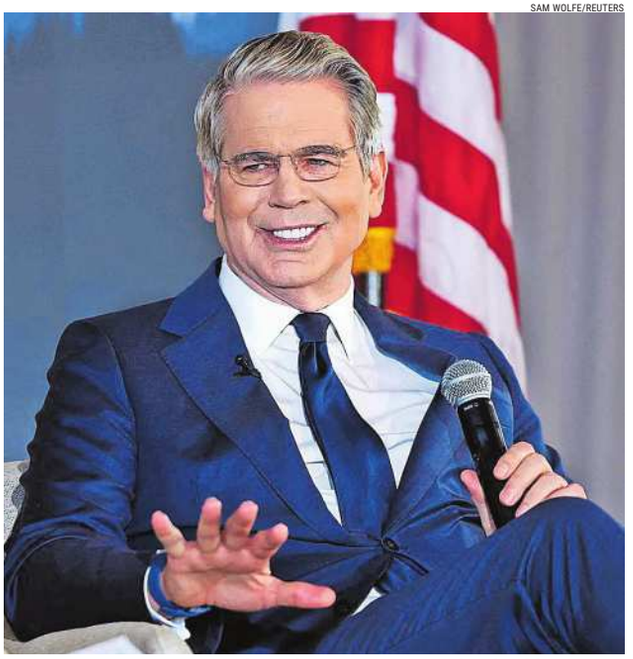
Last week, I wrote about the pretensions of Scott Bessent, US Treasury secretary, who is hectoring US bond investors about why they've got it all wrong when it comes to the fiscal trajectory of the world's largest economy. Bessent is so confident that the bond vigilantes are wrong to be worried about the state of the country's $40 trillion debt burden, or its 3.5 per cent rate of inflation, that he is intervening to bring down US government bond yields.

His intervention has sparked a debate about a new phase of financial repression in the world's superpower. Bessent has hinted at wanting the US's ten-year bond yield below 4 per cent. At the time of writing, it is at 4.8 per cent and climbing. If Bessent is serious about reducing US borrowing costs, his "buybacks" need to be more bazooka and less pea-shooter. So far, investors have scoffed at his efforts. They think it is the latter.

Financial repression comes in many forms. Historically, it has been a way for governments to manipulate their cost of borrowing by shifting the burden of public debt to domestic savers. Artificially lowering the savings rate is a tax on households, businesses and bondholders.

There are four broad ways for a state to force lower borrowing costs: by intervening in bond markets; keeping central bank rates unduly low; creating a captive market for your debt; and controlling who takes money in and out of your country.

SAM WOLFE/REUTERS



Scott Bessent is intervening to bring down US government bond yields

Financial repression of the first kind — bond market interventions — has been the go-to policy of Japan for more than a decade. It is a case study that Bessent knows and seemingly admires. He came to office in 2025 promising a Japanese-style "three arrows" strategy: achieving annual growth of 3 per cent of GDP; reducing the budget deficit to 3 per cent; and producing three million barrels of oil a day. Implicit in this triumvirate is perhaps a 3 per cent yield on ten-year US debt.

If Bessent wants to turn Japanese, he will have to throw the kitchen sink at the treasury market. Japan has carried out the boldest experiment in financial repression. In 2016, it took the unprecedented step of capping the ten-year government bond yield at 0 per cent. The central bank hoovered up 40 per cent of Japanese debt to get there. On the whole, it worked.

The strategy was abandoned in 2024, when Japan finally generated inflation. Its interest rates are up from rock bottom, and the government is paying the highest debt-servicing costs since the 1990s. Even now, the authorities are trying to push back the tide of higher interest rates. The sharp declines in the yen this year reflect worries that Japan's central bank will be too scared to raise interest rates and create a fiscal crisis.

Japan is, however, a rare example of extreme bond market measures. Most modern forms of financial repression are softer, regulatory attempts to create artificial demand for your debt.

The Japanese have also engaged in more subtle measures. They want its state-run pension fund, the largest retirement pot in the world, to use more of its firepower at home. In South Korea, the National Pension Service holds 20 to 30 per cent of its assets in government bonds.

The eurozone has pioneered soft financial repression to keep the single currency together. In 2022, when global interest rates were rising across the world, the European Central Bank announced a new instrument to stop the "spreads" between its highest and lowest indebted countries from blowing out. This is an implicit backstop to help France and Italy. During its 2010s debt crisis, the ECB gave cheap loans to its commercial banks and nudged them to buy riskier, higher-yielding sovereign debt.

Bessent has also leant on soft financial repression. He wants US banks to be able to hold more domestic debt. These holdings are likely to be exempt from regulatory rules in the event of a market panic, as in 2021-22, when the Federal Reserve stepped in to calm a sell-off.

The Trump administration has also engaged in a form of "trade repression", increasing tariffs to generate tens of billions of dollars of revenues paid for mainly by US companies to help shrink its ballooning fiscal deficit.

The question is how far Bessent is willing to go. The US has dabbled in the first three categories but not the most extreme form: capital controls, or deciding who is allowed to take money in and out of your country and hold your assets.

Stringent controls were used in Nazi Germany and Mussolini's Italy in the 1930s to stabilise exchange rates during a monetary regime collapse of the gold standard. More recently, India and Argentina used capital controls, preventing banks from foreign currency holdings and limiting convertibility of local currencies. A more common strategy among emerging markets since the Covid pandemic has been to get foreigners out of their local bond holdings and push them on to local savers. Indonesia has shrunk the share of its local debt in the hands of foreign ownership from 40 per cent to 13 per cent, according to figures from Fathom Consulting.

The Trump administration flirted with punishing overseas holders of US debt through a proposed withholding tax on foreigners last year. It was dropped after talks with the G7. Such measures would be a perilous path for the US, the holder of the world's reserve currency and world's safe asset, to tread. Bessent isn't there — yet.

Mehreen Khan is Economics Editor of The Times

Bunzl slips despite rise in American revenues

Robert Lea Industrial Editor

Investors in Bunzl were unimpressed by the latest half-year results from the FTSE 100 distribution group yesterday despite rising revenues, profits and dividends and a return of the share buyback.

Shares in the company, which supplies cleaning materials to workplaces, disposables to the hospitality trade and packaging to retailers, closed sharply lower although the company reported a 3 per cent rise in revenues to £5.9 billion and a 10 per cent increase in pre-tax profit to £380 million in the six months to the end of June.

For good measure, Bunzl also raised the interim dividend by 3 per cent to 20.8p and reinstated a share buyback programme worth £500 million over the next 12 months in a programme designed to underpin the ratings of its share price. The stock, however, closed down by 50p, or 1.8 per cent, at £27.42, valuing the business at £8.8 billion.

Bunzl has previously enjoyed one of the surest reputations among investors, generally growing alongside the pace of the economies in which it operates and adding acquisitions of smaller companies in sectors and geographies. However, last year the company issued a profit warning triggered by problems with its distribution business in North America, its most important market.

Frank van Zanten, chief executive for the past 11 years, said that he had fixed the US problem, service levels had been restored and employees re-motivated.

However, he admitted the corporate world remained a tough place in which to do business and margins remained under pressure due to inflation, which it could struggle to pass on to customers in a competitive environment.

"The macroeconomic backdrop remains uncertain with challenging end markets and volatile input prices," he said, adding that "attractive bolt-on acquisitions are a priority for the business, with our pipeline remaining active and acquisition momentum building".

For the full year, Van Zanten said that investors could expect only a small amount of underlying revenue growth topped up by new income from acquisitions. Operating margins would stay at last year's level of 7.6 per cent, which should all add up to "modest" growth in operating profits.

Analysts have been critical of the company for not doing more to increase profit margins by cutting costs.

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Business

Shein claws back losses on debut

CHAN LONG HEI/AP

The fast-fashion chain listed in Hong Kong yesterday after facing hurdles in London and the US

The fast-fashion seller Shein had a less than stellar debut after its long-awaited flotation in Hong Kong, underscoring the pressures facing the sector as governments clamp down on ecommerce (Isabella Fish writes).

Shares in the group initially fell as much as 10 per cent after launching on the exchange, before clawing back most of those losses to close down fractionally on its opening price.

The float price of HK$48.56 had valued Shein at $26.5 billion, dramatically lower than its peak of almost $100 billion in 2022, shortly after a pandemic-fuelled boom in demand. At the time, it was briefly in the same league as some of the world's most valuable fashion businesses and was one of the world's most highly valued start-ups.

Shein has been dogged by scrutiny of its supply chain, labour practices, alleged intellectual property infringements and links to China. Its attempts to list in the United States and London faced regulatory and political hurdles and were ultimately blocked by Chinese authorities, which led it to list in Hong Kong.

"I think the weak debut shows that even after the huge valuation reset, investors still don't see Shein as obviously cheap," Charu Chanana, chief investment strategist at Saxo, told Reuters.

Shein was co-founded in China in 2008 by Chris Xu, also known as Xu Yangtian, and now has its headquarters in Singapore. It grew from an obscure online retailer into a global fast-fashion powerhouse by using data to identify trends and producing thousands of designs at extraordinary speed.

Its ultra-low prices — £3 dresses and £8 jeans — put pressure on established chains. However, that changed after western governments cracked down on favourable customs treatment for low-value parcels. In the US, the $800 de minimis exemption for low-value imports ended, increasing costs for retailers that ship small parcels directly to consumers.

In Britain, goods worth up to £135 have benefited from customs-duty relief, which the government is planning to remove by 2029, although VAT is still payable.

The crackdown has weakened its growth. Revenue rose from $32.1 billion in 2023 to $38.8 billion in 2024 and $41.9 billion last year, but net profit fell to about $2 billion last year from $3.4 billion the year before. In the first quarter of this year, revenue growth slowed to 1.1 per cent, and Shein recorded a $99 million loss.

Leigh Gui, Shein finance chief, said: "As a new company listed in Hong Kong, we will continue to innovate, optimise, and co-operate with our supply chain partners for mutual benefit."

Win a Swan Lake Birmingham escape

One Times+ member can win a pair of tickets to see Birmingham Royal Ballet's *Swan Lake* at the Birmingham Hippodrome from September 23 to October 3. The prize also includes a one-night stay with dinner and breakfast at Hilton Garden Inn Birmingham Brindleyplace, close to the theatre district. Featuring striking costumes and the Royal Ballet Sinfonia, this production brings one of ballet's great love stories to the stage.

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Ashley's group puts Hugo Boss chair on notice

Guy Taylor Retail Correspondent

Mike Ashley's Frasers Group has put a question mark over its support for the chairman of Hugo Boss as it confirmed plans to take full control of the German luxury fashion house.

In a stock exchange statement, the owner of Sports Direct and Flannels said it was "reviewing whether it continues to support Mr Stephan Sturm in his position", raising the prospect that it could move to force him out as chairman of the supervisory board.

The latest intervention comes months after Frasers launched a £1.7 billion voluntary takeover offer for Hugo Boss, its most significant move in a long-running campaign to exert influence over the label. Although it ultimately fell short of taking full control, the deal resulted in its stake in the firm increasing to nearly 48 per cent.

Yesterday the FTSE 250 retailer, which is already the largest shareholder in Hugo Boss, confirmed it intended to increase its interest beyond the 50 per cent mark, which would trigger majority ownership and bring on board the company's revenue, profit and debt.

It would also open the path to installing Michael Murray, Frasers Group's chief executive and Ashley's son-in-law, as chief executive of Hugo Boss.

Sources previously told The Times that the retailer was laying the groundwork for such a move, a signature playbook it has deployed in previous corporate skirmishes.

"There can be no certainty as to whether, when, or at what price any such acquisitions will be made, or that this objective will be achieved," Frasers cautioned in its statement, adding that it may continue to acquire or dispose of investments in Hugo Boss.

Andrew Wade, an equity analyst at the investment bank Jefferies, said passing the 50 per cent milestone would be "optically transformational" for Frasers' financial accounts and would "materially increase the complexity" of its reporting.

He added that the commentary on Sturm — who has served as chair of Hugo Boss's supervisory board for nearly a year and a half, alongside Murray, who is a board member — indicated an "increasingly hands-on approach" from the retailer.

In a statement Hugo Boss said: "We appreciate Frasers Group's continued long-term commitment to Hugo Boss and [look forward to] maintaining a constructive relationship with them as our single largest shareholder."

Ashley, the billionaire who began his empire with a shop in Maidenhead in 1982, has a long-running interest in expanding Frasers upmarket.

Hugo Boss was founded in 1924 and is the largest premium fashion house in Germany, with global sales topping €4.2 billion. The label achieved global success in the 1970s and 1980s by becoming a byword for corporate suits.

Efforts by Frasers to tighten its grip in recent years have included successfully pushing for Murray's appointment to the supervisory board and a public warning that it would vote against any future dividend payments.

Frasers has recently been on a deal-making spree which included securing a £40 million takeover of the department store chain Harvey Nichols.

Takeover of Capricorn Energy is gatecrashed by Norwegians

Emily Gosden Energy Editor

The Norwegian oil and gas operator DNO has agreed a $396 million deal to buy Capricorn Energy, gatecrashing a planned takeover by Genel.

The deal comes after Genel itself snubbed a takeover approach by DNO last month, complicating the outlook for the company.

Shareholders in the Egypt-focused Capricorn Energy had voted on August 18 to approve a $360 million takeover by Genel, which is looking to diversify beyond its sole producing asset in Kurdistan. However, Capricorn said yesterday that it had now reached agreement with DNO on a takeover pitched 10 per cent above Genel's offer.

DNO is Genel's majority partner in Kurdistan and also has assets in the UK and Norwegian North Sea.

On August 7, Genel announced that it had rebuffed a £202 million takeover offer from DNO, insisting that it "fundamentally undervalues" the company. DNO has until Friday to make another offer for Genel or walk away.

It is unclear whether Genel could afford to increase its offer for Capricorn or indeed whether it would be allowed to do so without special permission from the Takeover Panel.

Acquiring Capricorn was seen as crucial for Genel's longstanding efforts to diversify its portfolio. DNO's decision to substantially outbid Genel for Capricorn could therefore make Genel more vulnerable to takeover by DNO.

DNO's rebuffed offer for Genel was at 69p per share. Genel shares fell 5p, or 7.1 per cent, to 65¼p yesterday.

Genel came to the London market in 2011 when Turkey's Genel Enerji was bought in a reverse takeover by Vallares, an investment vehicle backed by the former BP boss Tony Hayward and the financier Nat Rothschild.

Hayward served as Genel chief executive initially but is no longer involved in the company, while Rothschild remains its third-biggest shareholder.

Capricorn Energy is focused on Egypt

Analysts at Panmure Liberum said that while Capricorn shareholders would have to vote on the DNO deal next month, they expected that "to be a formality given it was higher than the previously approved offer".

They added: "We doubt Genel will come back with a higher offer given that they are in [the] midst of a takeover situation themselves."

DNO said the acquisition represented its entry into Egypt. It said: "DNO intends to develop Egypt as a third core area alongside the North Sea and the [Kurdistan Region of Iraq] and has ambitious plans to build a significant Egyptian business over time."

Genel said it was "considering its position" and urged Capricorn shareholders to take no action in response to the DNO offer in the meantime.

Transatlantic bidding war breaks out for UK engineer

Robert Lea Industrial Editor

The battle between private equity firms for the British engineering company Bodycote has flared up again after an increased £1.64 billion offer from the US financiers Veritas Capital was accepted by its board. The London-based outfit CVC Advisers said it was considering a counter-offer.

Yesterday an offer of 932.8p a share in cash plus the already declared latest dividend of 7.2p by Veritas was recommended by the Bodycote board. Within the hour of that announcement, CVC told Bodycote shareholders to hold fast as it was considering its position.

Investors' expectations that a bidding war — which has been simmering all summer — will break out led the shares to jump above the offer on the table, rising 42p, or 4.6 per cent, to close at 955p.

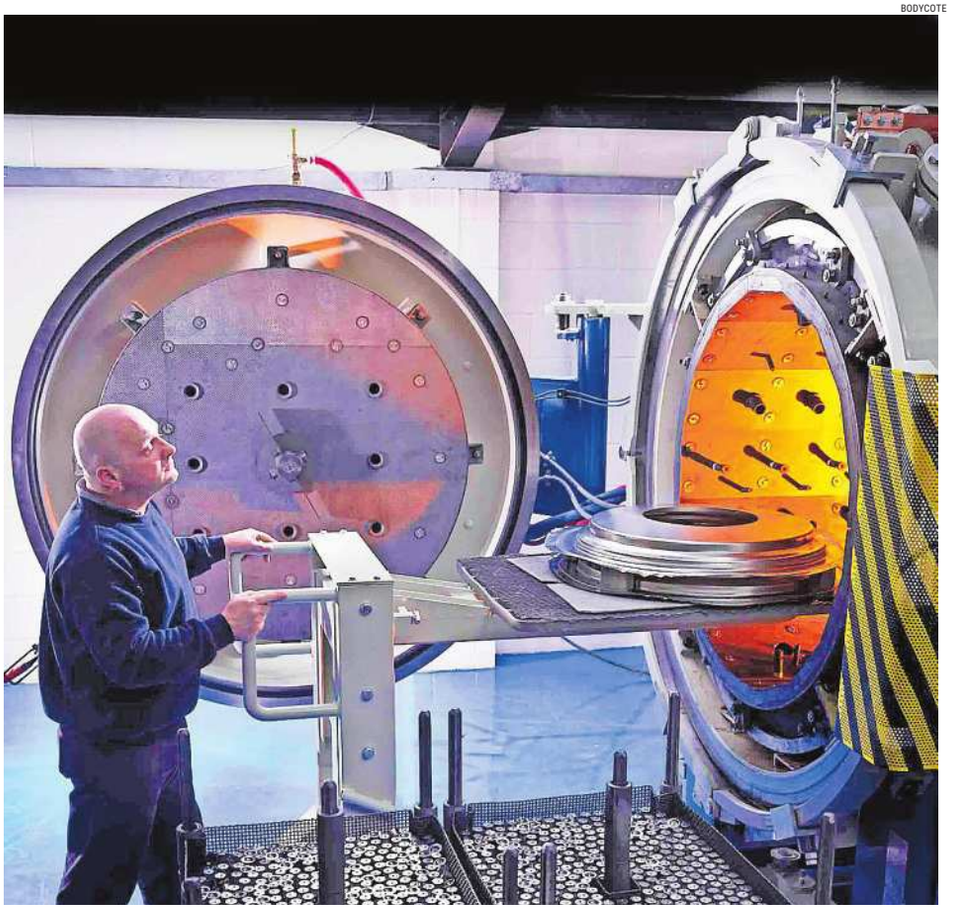
Shares in Bodycote, along with many other undervalued industrial stocks in London, had been in the doldrums since the pandemic, dropping as low as 460p 15 months ago. When news of the interest of Veritas and CVC broke in the late spring, the shares rose as high as 830p before falling back.

They perked up again at the start of last month when Bodycote said it had received offers of 915p from CVC, including the 7.2p interim dividend, and one from Veritas at 914p, also inclusive of the dividend.

The latest offer from Veritas at a total of 940p is still shy of the pre-pandemic £10 high the shares touched in 2018.

Bodycote is a leading global specialist in its field of thermal processing, using its proprietary methods to treat and make more durable metals and components for manufacturers in the aerospace and defence, energy and automotive sectors, as well for medical and general industrial companies.

BODYCOTE



Bodycote is a leading global player in its field of heat treatments to make components for sectors including aerospace

The company was originally in textiles in Leicestershire a century ago before, by acquisition, getting into heat treatment, thermal processes and metallurgicals in the 1970s and 1980s and becoming a leading player in the United States after the turn of the millennium.

Headquartered in Macclesfield, Cheshire, it does half of its business in western Europe and 40 per cent across North America. Its last set of results showed revenues rising by 3 per cent and profits up 10 per cent. Its last full-year results reported operating profits of £104 million on revenues of £727 million, both down on prior years.

The Veritas offer values Bodycote at about 18 times this year's projected post-tax earnings.

In its offer document, Veritas explained what it likes about the company: it has technical capabilities that few others have, material science expertise and a global network with longstanding customer relationships in attractive markets.

Bodycote has also been going through a rationalisation process, shutting down sites, especially in the automotive sector.

Bodycote is of particular interest, Veritas said, because of its own industrial acquisitions and portfolio of companies in aero-engine technology and maintenance, and electronic componentry in the defence and space sectors.

"Veritas believes that this longstanding experience provides important industry knowledge, operating expertise and insight into the customers and end markets Bodycote serves, which would support Bodycote's continued development and strengthen its strategic relevance to its customers and ecosystem.

"As a private company under Veritas's ownership, Bodycote will benefit from enhanced flexibility and long-term perspective to support continued investment in the business and pursue targeted organic and inorganic growth opportunities."

Daniel Dayan, chairman of Bodycote, said: "The Bodycote board believes that this offer reflects the high quality of Bodycote's business and management and delivers shareholders excellent value in cash."

Green light from Gamma for £1 billion Epiris offer

Emma Powell
Media and Telecoms Editor

A FTSE 250 telecommunications services provider has backed a £1 billion offer from a British private equity firm, paving the way for its exit from the embattled London market.

The chairman of Gamma Communications, which provides communications services to businesses, said that the 1,120p-a-share cash bid from Epiris would provide shareholders with "attractive and certain value".

The offer, which values Gamma at £1.02 billion, represents a 53 per cent premium to the company's undisturbed share price in April, when interest from several bidders first emerged.

Waterland, the Dutch private equity firm, and Giacom, which is led by the telecoms entrepreneur Matthew Riley, have also been plotting a bid for the company. The deal would result in Giacom buying two of Gamma's divisions, which accounted for almost 30 per cent of revenue last year, once their takeover had completed.

Waterland and Giacom are understood to be still interested in a potential takeover and are assessing their next move. They have until September 18 to either make a firm offer or walk away.

For Giacom, which is backed by the British private equity firm Inflexion, the purchase of a chunk of Gamma's businesses would allow it to realise synergies and strip out costs.

It is understood the board thought the Epiris offer to be more straightforward and with lower execution risk, compared with the rival proposals. The private equity firms Providence Equity Partners and Oakley Capital had also been interested in a potential bid, but have since withdrawn from the process.

Ian Wood, a partner at Epiris, said its offer represented "a compelling and deliverable offer which provides Gamma shareholders with certainty of value". If approved by shareholders, the takeover is expected to complete next year.

Gamma shares closed up 1.4 per cent, or 16p, at £11.56. When the takeover interest emerged in April they were valued at their lowest since 2018.

Last year Gamma moved from Aim, London's junior market, to the main market, which Andrew Belshaw, its chief executive, said at the time was a "natural evolution".

For the last financial year it reported revenue of £646 million, an 11 per cent increase on the previous year, although pre-tax profit declined 8 per cent to £87.7 million, on the back of acquisition and restructuring costs.

Business

The Times unit trust information service

ALLIANZ GLOBAL INVESTORS
Inv Serv: 020 7065 1400 Helpline: 0800 317 573

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Strategic Bond Fund ‡	127.56		-2.23	8.22
UK Equity A ‡	385.64		-15.35	4.09
UK Growth ‡	10256.66		-144.85	2.25

ARTEMIS FUND MGRS
0800 092 2051
Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Global Income Fund R Acc ‡	384.19		-2.03	...
Global Income Fund R Inc ‡	216.05		-1.14	...
Global Select Fund R ‡	231.08		-0.61	...
High Income Fund R Inc ‡	66.8		-0.15	...
Income Fund R Acc ‡	798.87		-4.51	...
Income Fund R Inc ‡	306.19		-1.73	...
Monthly Dist & R Inc ‡	92.63		-0.50	...
SmartGarp Eurp Equity R ‡	888.44		-6.47	...
SmartGarp Global Equity R ‡	700.84		-2.14	...
SmartGarp UK Equity R ‡	4257.23		-28.46	...
Strategic Assets R Acc ‡	96.3		+0.23	...
Strategic Bd R M Acc ‡	116.1		-0.37	...
Strategic Bd R M Inc ‡	52.49		-0.17	...
Strategic Bd R Q Acc ‡	115.89		-0.38	...
Strategic Bd R Q Inc ‡	52.17		-0.35	...
UK Select R Acc ‡	1314.55		-20.87	...
Uk Smaller Cos R Acc ‡	2322.48		-38.91	...
UK Special Sits R Acc ‡	1082.78		-14.27	...

AXA FRAMLINGTON UNIT MGMT
Dling: 0845 602 1952 Priv Clients:0845 777 5511

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Health ‡	3411		-48.00	...
UK Select Opps Inc ‡	2105		-31.00	1.10
UK Sml Cos Inc ‡	327.9		-5.50	0.37
UK Sust Eqty R Dis ‡	233.5		-3.70	1.10

AXA FUND MANAGERS
Admin & Enq 0117 989 0808
UK/Global Investment Companies

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Global Gwth Acc R ‡	288.1		...	0.52
Japan Acc A ‡	162.3		...	1.51

CIS UNIT MANAGERS
08457 46 46 46

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
European Growth ‡	293		-1.84	1.14
Sus Leaders ‡	1016		-0.97	1.47
UK Growth ‡@	870.8		-0.73	1.69
UK Income ‡	258.3		-0.39	3.83

CLOSE FUND MANAGEMENT
Dealing 020 7426 6232

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Winchester ‡	5745.61		...	0.60

COLUMBIA THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS
Enqs:0870 601 6183 Dealing: 0870 6083
Share Class 1-Retail

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Gwth & Inc ‡	1580		-27	0.10
FTSE All Shr Track ‡	593.1		-5.1	2.70
Global Gwth SCI ‡	400.2		-4.2	...
Strategic Bd ‡	227.4		-1.1	4.00

EDENTREE INV MGMT
0800 358 3010

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Sust Eur Eqty A Dis ‡	493.3		-3.50	1.84
Sust Gbl Eqty A Dis ‡	456.7		-2.50	0.53
Sust Mgd Income ‡	140.3		-0.90	4.02
Sust Sterling Bond A Dis ‡	84.66		-0.37	4.99
Sust UK Eqty A Dis ‡	250.7		-3.10	1.77
Sust UK Eqty Opps A Dis ‡	324.9		-3.90	1.47

FIDELITY INTERNATIONAL
Private Clnts:0800 414161 Broker Dlgs:0800 414181

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Spec ‡	2902		...	...
American ‡	7937		...	...
Euro Opps ‡	736.2		...	0.49
European ‡	4344		...	0.78
Global Focus ‡	3668		...	...
Global High Income Bond A Dis ‡	22.25		...	6.42
Global Special Sits ‡	8846		...	...
Japan ‡	982.6		...	0.34
Moneyblder Bal ‡	48.47		...	3.56
Moneyblder Inc ‡	27.98		...	5.07
Moneyblder UK Ind ‡	200.72		...	2.49
Special Sits ‡	7482		...	1.65

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Opportunities Fund A Dis ‡	105.2		...	1.72

HALIFAX INVESTMENT FUND MGRS
01296 386 386
Authorised Inv Funds
Share Class C

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corporate Bond ‡	37.12		...	4.70
Intl Gwth ‡	215.8		...	0.60
UK FTSE 100 IT ‡	107.8		...	...
UK FTSE All-S IT ‡	119.9		...	...

HSBC GLOBAL ASSET MGMT (UK)
Enq:0845 745 6123 Dlg:0845 745 6126 Mon-Frid:8-6
HSBC Index Tracker Investment Funds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Ind Acc ‡	1623		-3	0.78
Euro Ind Acc ‡	1831		-28	2.32
Euro Ind Inc ‡	1061		-16	2.37
FTSE 100 Ind Acc ‡	438.1		-3.1	2.51
FTSE 100 Ind Inc ‡	178.0		-1.2	2.66
FTSE 250 Ind Acc ‡	407.4		-7.8	2.88
FTSE 250 Ind Inc ‡	220.9		-4.2	2.87
FTSE All-S Acc ‡	1103		-10	2.68
FTSE FTSE All-S Inc ‡	496.3		-4.1	2.82
Japan Ind Acc ‡	237.2		+1.8	1.42
Japan Ind Inc ‡	172.0		+1.3	1.46
Pacific Ind Acc ‡	1094		+9	1.51
Pacific Ind Inc ‡	619.1		+5.2	1.53

HSBC Investment Funds (OEIC) Retail Share Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bd Acc ‡@	310.3		-1.2	4.10
Income Acc ‡	1062		...	3.28
Monthly Inc Acc ‡@	313.4		...	3.75
Monthly Inc Inc ‡@	155.9		...	4.02
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Acc ‡@	221.4		-1.8	3.03
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Inv ‡@	85.80		-0.72	3.10

HSBC Specialist Investment Fds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American Index Retail Inc ‡	1250		-2	0.76

INVESCO FUND MGRS LTD
Dling:0800 085 8571 Inv Serv:0800 085 8677
Brkr Serv:0800 028 2121
Invesco Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond ‡	230.08		...	4.10
High Income Dis ‡	431.1		...	3.16
Income & Growth Dis ‡	502.28		...	3.12
Income Inc ‡	1665.97		...	2.87
Money Acc ‡	108.08		...	3.63
Monthly Inc Plus Dis ‡	91.59		...	5.78
UK Opps UK Acc ‡	1384.15		...	1.48
UK Sml Cos Eqty Acc ‡	1338.46		...	1.23

INVESTEC FUND MGRS LTD
Broker Support and Dealing: 020 7597 1900
OEIC Series I, ii,iii & iv

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American A Acc ‡	875.29		-1.93	...
Cautious Managed A Acc ‡	470.34		-2.11	2.64
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡	269.67		-1.15	2.53
Diversified Growth A Acc ‡	329.28		-4.18	0.21
Diversified Growth Inc ‡	121.16		-1.54	0.97
Diversified Income A Acc ‡	375.86		-0.89	3.90
Diversified Income A Inc ‡	67.41		-0.43	5.32
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Ac ‡	143.92		-0.61	5.79
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Inc ‡	65.48		-1.47	7.63
Emerging Mkts Equity A Ac ‡	292.39		-1.68	0.04
Emerging Mkts Leaders A Acc ‡	1240.67		-9.32	...
Global Equity A Acc ‡	299.94		-3.83	...
Global Franchise A Acc ‡	403.4		-2.93	...
Global Free Enterprise A Acc ‡	2097.83		-26.1	...
Global Gold A Acc ‡	603.38		-41.1	...
Global Special Situations A Acc ‡	532.97		-6.53	...
Global Special Situations A Inc ‡	408.88		-5.01	...

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Special Situations A Acc ‡	2689.99		-48.32	1.05
UK Special Situations A Inc ‡	925.11		-16.62	1.06

For ISIS Asset Mgmt see F&C Fd Mgmt Ltd (OEIC)

JANUS HENDERSON INVESTORS
Investor Serv: 0800 832 831 Dlng:0845 946 4646

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
All Stcks Credit A Inc ‡	112.9		...	4.50
Asian Div Inc U Trust Inc ‡	101.9		...	5.60
Cautious Managed Fd A Acc ‡	354.6		...	3.80
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡	152.2		...	3.90
China Opp Fund A Acc ‡	1293		...	0.10
Emg Mkts Opps Fd A Acc ‡	306.2		...	...
Erpn Sel Opps Fd A Acc ‡	3210		...	0.20
Fix IntMnthly Inc Fd Acc ‡	33.11		...	5.90
Global Equity Fund Acc ‡	6520		...	...
Global Equity Income A Ac ‡	87.3		...	2.30
Global Tech A Acc ‡	6960		...	...
Instl UK idx Opps A Acc ‡	177.6759		...	2.10
M-Asset Abs Rtn A Acc ‡	188.4		...	2.70
M-Man Active Fd A Acc ‡	336.4		-2.2	1.80
M-Man Inc Grth A Inc ‡	161.4		...	2.80
M-Man Inc Fd Grth A Acc ‡	232.5		...	2.70
Sterling Bond U Trst Acc ‡	228.2		...	4.30
Sterling Bond U Trst Inc ‡	55.11		...	4.30
Strategic Bond A Inc ‡	95.32		...	5.70
UK Abs Ret Fd A Acc ‡	207.1		...	2.10
UK Alpha Fund A Acc ‡	197.5		...	1.20
US Growth Fund A Acc ‡	2965		...	...

J.P. MORGAN ASSET MANAGEMENT
OEIC

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Equity Core E Net Acc ‡@	705.2000		-5.7000	2.54

JUPITER UT TRUST MANAGERS LTD
020 7581 3020

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Distribution & Growth ‡	124.7		-0.7891	2.93
Euro Special Sits ‡	591.47		-1.5043	0.71
European ‡	3935.85		-1.5165	0.61
Financial Opps ‡	1336.85		-0.8244	1.01
Global Macro Bd L GBP ACC ‡	425.64		-1.4199	3.87
Merlin Bal Acc ‡	348.14		-0.2472	2.26
Merlin Growth Acc ‡	834.91		-0.3131	0.20

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Merlin Inc Acc ‡@	470.35		-0.3823	3.40
Merlin Wwide Inc ‡	610.92		-0.1302	...
UK Dynamic Equity L Dis ‡	289.91		-0.8392	1.75
UK Growth ‡	282.67		-1.0345	0.64
UK Income Trust ‡	1013.74		-0.5874	4.58

LEGAL & GENERAL (UT MANGRS) LTD
Enquiries: 0870 050 0955 Dealing: 0870 050 0956

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Ind Acc ‡@	801.3		-12.3	1.90
Euro Ind Inc ‡@	478.5		-7.3	1.90
Fixed Int Acc ‡	149.4		-0.7	4.60
Fixed Int Dist ‡	61.74		-0.29	4.60
Global Health ‡	125.8		...	0.90
Glob Tech Acc ‡@	238.5		...	...
High Inc Acc ‡@	154.5		-0.2	5.70
Japan Ind Acc ‡	113.9		+1.1	1.30
Pacific Ind Acc ‡	433.8		+4.2	1.30
UK Index Trust Acc ‡	535.5		-4.5	2.50
Uk Index Trust Dist ‡	231.8		-2	2.50
US Ind Acc ‡	1419		...	0.50
Worldwide Acc ‡	469.7		-1.8	0.90

M&G SECURITIES
Enq:0800 390 390 Dealing Line: 0800 328 3196
Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Charifund Inc ‡	1901.1		-9.93	5.13

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 2

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Extra Income Inc ‡@	817.72		-9.83	5.16
Gilt & Fxd Int Inc ‡@	65.66		-1.19	4.87
Gl Hi Yd Bd Inc ‡@	39.68		-0.25	6.30
Index Linked Bd Inc ‡	100.78		-0.75	1.58
Index Trckr Inc ‡	103.99		-0.91	3.02
Short Dated Corp Bd Inc ‡@	25.06		-0.3	4.34
UK Select A Inc ‡	3297.08		-47.54	2.65

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 3

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bd A Inc ‡	32.54		-0.18	5.12
Dividend Inc ‡	66.23		-0.31	5.40
Recovery A Inc ‡	140.29		-2.82	2.89
Sml Cos Inc ‡	358.19		-9.92	2.86

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 4

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Episode Allocation A Inc ‡@	160.21		-1.32	3.83

MARKS & SPENCER UNIT TRUST
0808 005 5555

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
High Income ‡	87.32		...	4.60
High Income Acc ‡	298		...	4.60
UK 100 Comp Acc ‡	719		...	3.10
UK 100 Comp Inc ‡	323.5		...	3.10
UK Select Port ‡	478.9		...	2.90
UK Select Port Acc ‡	1095.5		...	2.90
W'wide Mgd Acc ‡	1340		...	0.20
Worldwide Mgd Acc ‡	745.9		...	0.20

MORGAN STANLEY INVESTMENT MGMT
Enquiries: 0800 0961 962
The Morgan Stanley Funds (UK)
Class A Shares
Equity

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Glob Bal Inc F F Acc ‡	1049.40		...	1.54
Glob Bal Inc F F Inc ‡	938.65		...	1.55
Glob Bal Inc F I Inc ‡	936.69		...	1.49
Glob Bal Inc F I Acc ‡	1046.53		...	1.47
Glob Bal Sust F F Acc ‡	1036.68		...	1.65
Glob Bal Sust F F Inc ‡	989.88		...	1.66
Glob Bal Sust F I Acc ‡	1034.12		...	1.57
Glob Bal Sust F I Inc ‡	989.45		...	1.60
Glob Br Eq Fund F Inc ‡	1119.5		...	4.26
Glob Br Eq Fund I Acc ‡	1763.31		...	4.23
Glob Br Eq Fund I Inc ‡	1183.33		...	4.35
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	14297.23		...	0.32
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡	1656.19		...	0.45
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	1765.33		...	0.45
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡	3845.49		...	0.32
Glob Quality Fund F Acc (PH) ‡	1549.3		...	0.49
Glob Quality Fund F Inc ‡	1509.27		...	0.51
Glob Quality Fund I Acc ‡	1550.9		...	0.34
Glob Quality Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	1543.82		...	0.34
Glob Quality Fund F Acc ‡	1567.4		...	0.51
Stg Corp Bond F F Acc ‡	143.77		...	4.91
Stg Corp Bond F F Inc ‡	97.12		...	4.95
Stg Corp Bond F I Inc ‡	1372.84		...	4.76
Stg Corp Bond F I Acc ‡	3041.23		...	4.76
US Adv F F Acc ‡	2484.57		...	...
US Adv F F Acc (PH) ‡	1496.05		...	...
US Adv F I Acc ‡	2615.55		...	...
US Adv F I Acc (PH) ‡	1548.74		...	...

SANTANDER UNIT TST MGRS
08457 413002

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Equity Inc Inc ‡	236.2		...	...
Stkmkt 100 Tkr ‡	230.8000		...	...
UK Growth I Acc ‡	650.0		...	...
UK Growth Inc ‡	312.1		...	...

SCOTTISH MUTUAL INV MNGRES LTD
0141 248 6100

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Far Eastern Inc	617.0700	649.4700	...	...
Mutual Far Eastern	1392.9300	1470.1100	+7.4	0.39
Mutual UK Eq	1429.4900	1508.7000	...	7.81
UK Equity Inc	562.2300	593.3800	...	7.81

SCOTTISH WIDOWS UNIT TRUST MNGRS
0845 300 2244
Overseas Growth Investment Funds
Tracker & Special Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr A Acc ‡	610.3		+5.30	2.50
UK Trkr A Inc ‡	277.7		+2.40	2.50

UK & Income Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond A Acc ‡@	327.8		-1.00	4.20
Corp Bond A Inc ‡@	107.2		-0.60	4.20
Envir Invtr A Acc ‡	469.9		+0.40	2.10
Hi Inc Bond A Ac ‡@	300.6		+1.10	6.40
Hi Inc Bond A Inc ‡@	70.52		-0.06	6.40
Hi Res A Acc ‡@	562.7		+0.70	3.70
Hi Res A Inc ‡@	150.8		-1.30	3.80
Strat In A Acc ‡@	228.2		-0.60	4.60
Strat In A Inc ‡@	85.68		-0.50	4.60
UK Eq Trckr A ‡	136.9		+0.40	2.50

OEIC B Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr B Acc ‡	676.2		+5.90	2.60
UK Trkr B Inc ‡	276.2		+2.40	2.60

OEIC C Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Eq Tkr C ‡	133.7		+0.40	2.60

STANDARD LIFE INVESTMENTS
0845 279 3003
Investment Funds (OEIC)-Retail Shares

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
AAA Inc CAT Acc ‡	98.1		...	2.52
AAA Inc CAT Inc ‡	50.49		...	2.52
AAA Income Acc ‡	108.20		...	...
Amer Eq Gth Acc ‡	281.30		...	...
Glb Advtg CAT Acc ‡	201.7		...	1.32
Glob Advtg Acc ‡	265.80		...	...
Higher Inc Acc ‡	186.20		...	...
Higher Inc Inc ‡	47.53		...	...
Managed Acc ‡	519.6		...	1.83
UK Ethical Acc ‡	257.50		...	...
UK Smlr Cos Acc ‡	806.80		...	...

SVS BROWN SHIPLEY FUNDS
Enquiries:0141 222 1151

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Balanced A Acc ‡	186.24		...	2.02
Blanced A Inc ‡	157.07		...	2.07
Cautious A Acc ‡	132.77		...	2.44
Cautious A Inc ‡	104.28		...	2.48
Dynamic A Acc ‡	498.14		...	1.40
Dynamic A Inc ‡	434.44		...	1.41
Growth A Acc ‡	491.8		...	1.63
Income A Acc ‡	318.35		...	2.17

THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS
Client Serv: 0800 0684000
Retail Shares Class 1

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Threadneedle HY Bd Rtl Inc ‡	39.3677		-4.21	...
Threadneedle Mnthly Etr Inc Inc ‡	100.635		-79.67	...
Threadneedle SterlingCorp Bd Inc ‡	54.5388		-25.82	...
Threadneedle SterlingCorp Acc ‡	54.4278		-25.82	...
Threadneedle Stg Bd Ret Inc ‡	39.2549		-22.89	...
Threadneedle Strat Bd Ret ‡	41.5606		-17.05	...
Threadneedle UK Eq Inc Rtl Inc ‡	118.7712		-117.88	...
Threadneedle UK Growth & inc Rtl Inc ‡	111.3302		-105.24	...
Threadneedle UK Istl Rtl ‡	248.0649		-262.1	...
Threadneedle UK Mnthly Inc Rtl Inc ‡	88.7045		-98.03	...
Threadneedle UK Rtl Inc ‡	166.2135		-165.34	...
Theadneedle U Smaller Coms Rtl Inc ‡	400.7364		-962.26	...

For Resolution see Ignis

TU FUND MANAGERS LTD

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
IFSL Marlborough Eur A Dis @	995.3	995.3	...	1.23

* Yield expressed as CAR (Compound Annual Return); † Ex dividend; ‡Middle price; . . . No significant data. # Periodic charge deducted from capital; @ Exit charge

British funds

Index-Linked

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
73.08	63.23	Tr IL 0 ½% 50	63.45	– .72	0.79	2.58
66.33	56.14	Tr IL 0 ¼% 52	56.59	– .66	0.44	2.58
101.91	97.20	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 28	99.59	+ .03	0.13	0.34
100.99	97.50	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 29	98.47	– .03	0.13	0.73
98.88	94.73	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 31	95.91	– .06	0.13	0.98
88.33	82.97	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 36	83.43	– .40	0.15	1.92
82.85	76.16	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 39	77.26	– .39	0.16	2.21
79.32	72.07	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 41	72.54	– .45	0.17	2.31
74.05	65.19	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 44	66.68	– .45	0.19	2.48
71.23	62.56	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 46	63.00	– .57	0.20	2.54
68.00	58.90	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 48	59.24	– .69	0.21	2.57
60.61	49.35	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 56	49.83	– .81	0.25	2.50
58.90	48.29	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 58	48.72	– .76	0.26	2.48
54.25	42.88	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 65	43.42	– .93	0.29	2.34
53.89	40.40	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 68	42.32	– .94	0.30	2.28
57.66	42.83	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 73	43.52	– .98	0.29	1.99
97.88	93.36	Tr IL 0 ¾% 34	93.95	– .20	0.80	1.60
79.12	70.61	Tr IL 0 ¾% 47	70.93	– .70	1.06	2.53
62.70	49.79	Tr IL 0 ⅜% 62	51.42	– .84	0.73	2.42
87.38	80.53	Tr IL 0 ⅝% 40	80.94	– .39	0.77	2.27
84.28	76.24	Tr IL 0 ⅝% 42	76.55	– .54	0.82	2.38
104.16	100.95	Tr IL 1 ¼% 27	101.47	+ .08	1.23	0.04
103.67	99.28	Tr IL 1 ¼% 32	99.89	– .11	1.25	1.27
86.56	72.33	Tr IL 1 ¼% 54	73.89	– .85	1.69	2.55
85.60	72.86	Tr IL 1 ¼% 55	73.44	– .90	1.70	2.54
99.52	94.19	Tr IL 1 ⅛% 35	94.58	– .37	1.19	1.78
97.09	90.65	Tr IL 1 ⅛% 37	91.06	– .36	1.24	2.02
102.53	95.86	Tr IL 1 ¾% 38	96.24	– .53	1.82	2.10
99.42	88.02	Tr IL 1 ⅞% 49	88.52	– .93	2.12	2.54
248.27	236.46	Tr IL 2% 35	241.41	– .72	0.83	1.78
349.35	338.55	Tr IL 4 ⅛% 30	341.77	– .14	1.21	0.97

Longs (Over 15 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
26.99	21.84	Tr 0 ½% 61	22.33	– .21	2.24	5.55
65.04	54.99	Tr 0 ⅛% 51	55.52	– .70	0.23	2.58
38.39	32.68	Tr 0 ⅝% 50	33.01	– .39	1.89	5.83
47.60	40.70	Tr 1 ½% 53	41.09	– .47	3.65	5.89
45.88	39.43	Tr 1 ¼% 51	39.79	– .42	3.14	5.89
33.04	27.10	Tr 1 ⅛% 73	27.29	– .38	4.12	5.39
48.44	41.54	Tr 1 ¾% 57	41.77	– .49	4.19	5.84
48.36	41.58	Tr 1 ⅝% 54	41.91	– .50	3.88	5.87
41.45	35.13	Tr 1 ⅝% 71	35.44	– .41	4.59	5.53
57.14	49.49	Tr 2 ½% 65	49.72	– .58	5.03	5.75
74.02	64.14	Tr 3 ½% 68	64.67	– .71	5.41	5.74
81.50	71.95	Tr 3 ¾% 52	72.33	– .63	5.18	5.83
80.90	70.96	Tr 3 ¾% 53	71.49	– .64	5.25	5.86
88.15	77.22	Tr 4 ¼% 55	77.82	– .69	5.46	5.84
83.52	72.76	Tr 4% 60	73.37	– .72	5.45	5.82

Mediums (5-15 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
83.19	79.47	Tr 0 ¼% 31	81.03	– .27	0.31	4.61
86.27	82.79	Tr 0 ⅜% 30	84.35	– .25	0.44	4.57
72.25	67.14	Tr 0 ⅝% 35	68.29	– .38	0.92	5.10
79.97	75.46	Tr 0 ⅞% 33	76.57	– .32	1.14	4.92
48.97	42.75	Tr 0 ⅞% 46	43.15	– .40	2.03	5.79
54.44	47.69	Tr 1 ½% 47	48.11	– .49	3.12	5.83
61.88	55.55	Tr 1 ¼% 41	56.27	– .49	2.22	5.56
66.75	60.85	Tr 1 ⅛% 39	61.69	– .45	1.82	5.40
75.83	69.99	Tr 1 ¾% 37	70.67	– .45	2.48	5.30
55.77	49.00	Tr 1 ¾% 49	49.31	– .50	3.55	5.83
85.07	81.01	Tr 1% 32	82.25	– .28	1.22	4.76
82.54	74.30	Tr 3 ½% 45	74.74	– .57	4.68	5.74
95.49	90.74	Tr 3 ¼% 33	91.25	– .35	3.56	4.85
80.41	72.54	Tr 3 ¼% 44	73.01	– .54	4.45	5.72
100.00	85.76	Tr 3 ¾% 38	86.44	– .50	4.34	5.35
102.40	96.34	Tr 4 ½% 34	96.80	– .43	4.65	4.99
101.93	0.01	Tr 4 ½% 35	96.13	– .45	4.68	5.07
96.45	87.54	Tr 4 ½% 42	88.05	– .61	5.11	5.63
102.33	0.01	Tr 4 ¼% 32	97.54	– .34	4.36	4.74
100.56	94.70	Tr 4 ¼% 34	95.16	– .42	4.47	5.00
99.39	92.65	Tr 4 ¼% 36	93.24	– .49	4.56	5.16
100.00	88.42	Tr 4 ¼% 39	88.97	– .57	4.78	5.44
100.00	86.92	Tr 4 ¼% 40	87.58	– .60	4.85	5.52
90.97	81.49	Tr 4 ¼% 46	82.03	– .62	5.18	5.76
89.58	79.81	Tr 4 ¼% 49	80.31	– .65	5.29	5.80
101.49	97.47	Tr 4 ⅛% 31	97.74	– .29	4.22	4.69
100.70	95.57	Tr 4 ⅛% 33	95.90	– .37	4.30	4.87
104.72	100.47	Tr 4 ¾% 30	100.59	– .29	4.72	4.59
103.33	96.78	Tr 4 ¾% 35	97.26	– .49	4.88	5.13
102.00	93.84	Tr 4 ¾% 38	94.37	– .56	5.03	5.38
102.58	98.98	Tr 4 ⅜% 30	99.18	– .24	4.41	4.63
97.07	89.07	Tr 4 ⅜% 40	89.51	– .59	4.89	5.49
100.37	99.20	Tr 4 ⅝% 32	99.29	– .35	4.66	4.77
100.00	94.52	Tr 4 ⅝% 37	94.90	– .53	4.87	5.26
100.99	96.96	Tr 4 ⅞% 36	97.47	– .50	5.00	5.20
105.68	96.52	Tr 5 ¼% 41	97.13	– .65	5.41	5.54
105.44	92.76	Tr 5 ⅜% 56	93.49	– .85	5.75	5.84

Shorts (Under 5 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
91.87	89.09	Tr 0 ½% 29	91.05	– .14	0.55	4.46
98.67	91.49	Tr 0 ⅛% 28	94.52	– .07	0.13	4.17
99.57	96.26	Tr 0 ⅜% 26	99.55	+ .01	0.38	3.68
91.00	0.01	Tr 0 ⅞% 29	89.40	– .19	0.98	4.54
97.51	95.36	Tr 1 ¼% 27	97.41	– .03	1.28	4.30
95.46	92.89	Tr 1 ⅝% 28	94.33	– .12	1.72	4.44
101.17	98.03	Tr 4% 29	98.51	– .18	4.06	4.59
101.39	99.44	Tr 4 ¼% 27	99.87	– .06	4.26	4.35
101.88	98.28	Tr 4 ⅛ % 29	98.76	– .19	4.18	4.59
100.70	99.60	Tr 4 ⅛% 27	100.01	– .01	4.12	4.05
101.65	99.40	Tr 4 ⅜% 28	99.87	– .09	4.38	4.46
107.15	103.23	Tr 6% 28	103.41	– .16	5.80	4.40

* maturities having an eight-month indexation lag.

This is a paid for information service. For further details on a particular fund, readers should contact their fund manager.

Data provided by ICE. Data as shown is for information purposes only. No offer is made by ICE or this publication

‘MFS isn’t just a City scandal, life savings are at risk here’

VICKI COUCHMAN FOR THE TIMES

Paresh Dabasia was one of the investors in Market Financial Solutions, which collapsed in February; right, the MFS office in Mayfair; Paresh Raja, below left, its former chief executive, has denied any wrongdoing

James Hurley Assistant Business Editor

The implosion of Market Financial Solutions is often presented as a tale of apparent failings by some of the world’s largest financial institutions, which lent more than £2 billion to an entrepreneur now alleged to have “plundered” the business.

There is another side to the story of the collapsed mortgage lender, however, which some affected individuals feel has been overlooked.

“It would suit a great many people for this to be remembered as solely a City story — some embarrassed institutions, a large number nobody can picture. It is not,” Paresh Dabasia says.

The 40-year-old and his family are among about 100 individuals estimated to have more than £200 million at risk in MFS, which administrators took over in February after a judge ordered an investigation into fraud claims.

Many, but not all, of those affected are from the British Indian community because of its connections to Paresh Raja. MFS’s former chief executive is accused by insolvency practitioners of extracting “vast sums” from the business, essentially by securing debt from various parties against the same properties, or “double pledging”. He is accused of misappropriating £1.3 billion and is subject to a global asset freezing order to the same value.

Many of the underlying borrowers are also alleged to be connected to Raja, 59, and his associates, and there are accusations from insolvency practitioners that he used funds to pay for a lavish lifestyle.

He has denied the allegations, maintaining there was no fraud or dishonesty and saying he categorically denies any wrongdoing.

As giant City and Wall Street institutions seek recoveries from one of the most complicated British insolvencies in recent memory, which involves more than 200 MFS-related companies, Dabasia’s MFS Private Creditors Group wants to ensure individuals are not forgotten. Most of the private investors are — or were — affluent, and in some cases very wealthy. Members include professionals such as doctors, solicitors and accountants. “They can’t all be dumb,” Dabasia says.

“They were duped.” Some have life savings and pensions at risk. One family group has about £60 million at risk, Dabasia says, adding: “That’s all the money they’ve ever made. We are not looking for a sympathy vote. But I want to show anyone can be caught by something like this. People may laugh at us but it could happen to you.”

Dabasia believes Raja used millions of pounds invested by individuals to help convince institutions to invest much larger sums. The earliest investment from a group member was in 2014, he said, which pre-dated the institutional investment.

By the time it failed, MFS had a loan book of about £2.6 billion. Barclays, Atlas SP (part of Apollo), Elliott Management, Wells Fargo, Castlelake, Jefferies and Santander are among those exposed.

Dabasia says: “Our money is how this business started, but all the talk has been of institutions.” He says the group is made up of 91 people representing close to £110 million owed to individual creditors, but he hopes the remainder of private investors will join.

Not everyone is convinced. There is talk of a potential splinter group amid concerns that speaking out could harm recoveries.

Prax Patel, a businessman who is also a private investor in MFS, says: “Mr Dabasia is either speaking solely for himself or also for [the creditor group chairman] Mukesh Patel, but he is not speaking for the committee and not for the investor community more widely.

“What he is doing seems to me . . . is not in the interests of the private investment community [and], indeed, it has the potential to be very harmful to them.” Prax Patel claimed Raja was trying to “materially help the investors”.

Dabasia says he has signed permission to speak on behalf of the group. “Some are hesitant to speak up but we need to: as normal individuals, normal taxpayers, we always get screwed. People ask insolvency practitioners about us. Their attitude seems to be, don’t worry about them. Well, it’s not all about the big institutions.”

Raja’s lawyer, Mike Stubbs of Mishcon de Reya, has called a meeting with private investors to discuss their concerns. Dabasia says: “We welcome the meeting. We will see what Raja has got to say.”

In common with many of those who backed MFS, Dabasia, who works in recruitment, met Raja and describes him as confident and convincing.

Dabasia was referred to MFS by his father, who was still investing as late as last November, when he alleged that Raja “must have known” the company was in trouble, as Barclays, MFS’s main bankers, froze its accounts that month.

Dabasia said: “Paresh knew this was sinking. He didn’t give a shit. So now Dad’s on a state pension. All his life he’s been an accountant and he’s been extremely risk-averse, [and] would only put money in the bank. That’s how convincing this was.”

The growth of institutional money became a selling point to bring more ordinary investors in, he added. “Paresh would say, ‘We don’t need your money, we have banks funding us hundreds of millions.’ He was telling us, ‘I am doing you a favour, I am helping you out’,” Dabasia said.

A spokesman for Raja did not respond to Dabasia’s claims but said Raja’s “sole focus is recovery for MFS investors, private and institutional alike. That work is under way with the administrators.”

Dabasia said he and others took comfort from another aspect of the saga he felt had been missed. While MFS is usually described as unregulated and registered with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) only for anti-money laundering purposes, one part of the group, Market Financial Solutions (UK), was regulated by the FCA.

Market Financial Solutions (UK) was registered to the same Mayfair address as the main MFS entities. Its director was Raja’s wife, Pratibha, also a director of Market Financial Solutions Limited, which sat at the centre of the group.

The “UK” business is on the FCA register. It is understood it had credit broking permissions and was not authorised to offer investments. Consumers only have cover for the Financial Ombudsman Service complaints scheme and Financial Services Compensation Scheme for specific regulated services being offered.

However, Dabasia claims the complicated regulatory position only served to confuse investors: “Our members checked the FCA register they were told to check. They found a firm with an FCA reference number, at a Mayfair address, run by people whose names matched. Everything they could see was reassuring, and everything that mattered was invisible.

“Paresh produced top-class brochures. It was, ‘I’m FCA registered, we’ve got corporates coming in, you can trust us because we’ve got institutions investing.’ We thought, if they are investing, they must have done their checks.”

MFS is being investigated by the FCA in relation to anti-money laundering controls, and accountancy and legal regulators have also started related investigations.

Dabasia said private investors were told MFS loans they backed were secured and provided at a maximum rate of 75 per cent of the underlying property value. “I thought, even if the market crashes 25 per cent, we’re still good. We just wanted a little help with school fees or maybe pay the mortgage a bit earlier.”

He recalled signing legal and tax documents related to the investment and underlying properties he thought he was lending against, and that they were told they would be named on property documents as holding security. Dabasia said: “It all seemed very professional. Recently, I checked the Land Registry. No mention of my name whatsoever.

“From what he portrayed the investment to be — the FCA, the security, the legal letters, the corporates — when it is all unpicked, it has turned out to be thin air. It is absolute betrayal.”

A spokesman for the FCA said it welcomes “information from anyone affected by the collapse”.

GSK hails positive results for its mRNA seasonal flu vaccine

Times Business Reporter

GSK has said it will advance its mRNA-based seasonal influenza vaccine candidate to a late-stage trial after mid-stage data showed it generated stronger immune responses than the currently approved standard and high-dose shots in younger and older adults.

The company, which sits alongside AstraZeneca as one of Britain’s two leading global pharmaceutical firms, said it would be the first late-stage trial of an mRNA flu vaccine to target two key surface proteins, haemagglutinin (HA) and neuraminidase (NA), an approach GSK said could improve protection and reduce transmission.

“These promising data support the potential to better protect people from flu with a vaccine designed to target both HA and NA,” Sanjay Gurunathan, head of vaccines research and development at GSK, said. “With 1 billion flu cases worldwide each year and up to 650,000 deaths, there is a need for next-generation vaccine approaches. This result is a significant advance in our cutting-edge mRNA programme, and we look forward to starting phase III imminently”.

Those at increased risk of seasonal influenza include older adults, pregnant women and people with underlying health conditions.

Although vaccination remains the cornerstone of flu prevention, a significant burden of disease still exists, reinforcing the need for continued research into approaches that may improve protection, GSK said.

In July the US Food and Drug Administration granted the vaccine candidate “fast track” designation, which GSK said reflected the urgent need to improve flu protection.

Last month Moderna won US approval for its mFlusiva, the first mRNA-based vaccine for seasonal flu, for people aged 50 and older.

The GSK move comes as part of its plans to start more than 20 late-stage studies by the end of the year, after a portfolio review by Luke Miels, chief executive, aimed at speeding up drug development.

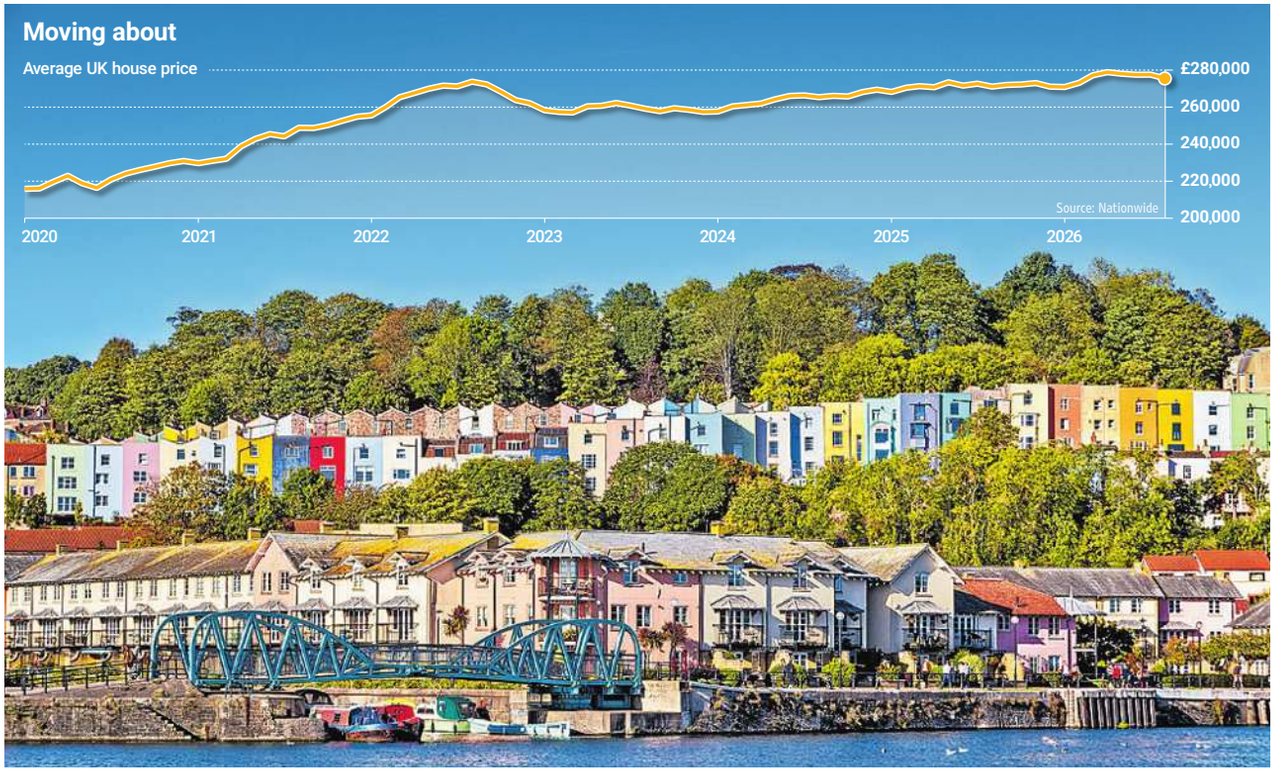
Miels, the former chief commercial officer, was promoted to succeed Dame Emma Walmsley in the top post at GSK at the start of this year.

GSK intends to begin the late-stage trial for the mRNA flu vaccine candidate this month.

Shares in GSK closed up 18p, or 1 per cent, at £18.71½.

Business

House prices up 0.2% in August



Simon Freeman

The average UK house price edged up by 0.2 per cent month-on-month in August after a downwardly revised 0.1 per cent dip in July.

Property values increased by 1.6 per cent in the year to August, up from 1.4 per cent annual growth in July, Nationwide Building Society said. The average house price in August was £275,465.

Robert Gardner, Nationwide's chief economist, said that market activity and house prices had remained subdued in recent months, in part reflecting the uncertain economic backdrop.

"Geopolitical tensions remain high, with the conflict in the Middle East exerting upward pressure on energy prices and market interest rates," he said. "Market expectations of the future path of the Bank of England base rate have been volatile.

"Underlying affordability is improving, as house price growth remains well below earnings growth, although some of these gains have been offset by higher mortgage rates. Nevertheless, this suggests that activity should regain momentum in the quarters ahead."

Ashley Webb, senior economist at Capital Economics, said the modest rise "underlines the continued drag on buyers' appetite from the previous rise in mortgage rates". He added: "Uncertainty over possible tax rises in the autumn budget on October 28 will probably only add to the restraints on house prices in the coming months.

"That's why we think prices will do little more than flatline over the remaining four months of this year, which would leave prices about 1.5 per cent higher in the fourth quarter than a year earlier."

The research firm expects the market to regain momentum next year, with prices rising by an above-consensus 3.5 per cent as the bank rate is lowered from 3.75 per cent to 3 per cent.

Analysts at Pantheon Macroeconomics agreed. Rob Wood, its chief UK economist, said: "We continue to take encouragement from the fact that Nationwide-measured house price inflation is running well above the signal from some of the soft data such as the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, which in July was consistent with house prices falling by around 0.2 per cent year-over-year.

"So we continue to think that fundamental demand is holding firm, even if some buyers are taking a wait-and-see approach to the path for interest rates."

Ian Futcher, a financial planner at Quilter, the wealth manager, said: "Ultimately, demand for home ownership remains strong, but affordability and interest rate expectations will continue to dictate the pace of the market. Greater confidence that borrowing costs are on a stable path would provide a meaningful boost to activity, but for now caution continues to prevail."

Nationwide said housing market activity and prices were subdued

Nicky Stevenson, managing director of Fine & Country estate agents, said: "As we head into autumn, we expect activity to improve from the summer slowdown, although uncertainty around inflation, mortgage rates and the wider policy environment will continue to limit stronger price growth.

"For buyers and sellers, the key message is that national house price figures only tell part of the story.

"Local market conditions can vary significantly and understanding supply, demand and pricing in your particular area will be more important than ever this autumn."

Jason Tebb, president of OnTheMarket, a property search platform, said: "Broadly stable property values indicate a subdued market as focused buyers, prepared to make their move during the usually quieter summer period, proved to be 'price sensitive'."

Iain McKenzie, chief executive of the Guild of Property Professionals, a large network of independent estate agents, said: "We would expect activity to build through the autumn, provided mortgage rates remain broadly stable and there is greater clarity around the policy outlook."

Mortgage approvals fall as 'toxic mix' hits market

Mortgage approvals dipped over the summer amid a subdued housing market chilled by high interest rates, official figures published yesterday showed (Jack Barnett writes).

The Bank of England reported that 56,100 home loans were approved in July, down from 58,215 in the previous month, below the six-month rolling average of 60,800.

Weaker demand for mortgages came after the effective interest rate on all newly drawn loans climbed to 4.45 per cent from 4.35 per cent in June.

Separate HMRC figures released recently showed that the number of house sales in July dipped by 2 per cent compared with the previous month, signalling that tighter borrowing conditions steered prospective buyers away from the property market.

Thomas Pugh, chief economist at RSM UK, a consultancy, said: "The outlook is tougher for the second half of the year. Inflation is set to jump, real household income growth will slow and survey measures of house prices and activity have continued to lose momentum.

"That combination of higher borrowing costs and lower disposable income is a toxic mixture for the housing market. There are also risks of interest rate rises and additional property taxes in the budget, which may weigh further on the housing market later this year."

Analysts at Pantheon Macroeconomics speculated that the recent downturn in mortgage demand was linked to buyers rushing to finalise "transactions in March and April, when buyers tried to get ahead of potential interest rate hikes".

Traders think the Bank of England may be forced into interest rate rises before the end of the year due to inflationary pressures caused by the war in the Middle East.

Yesterday UK government bond yields rose sharply, which, if sustained, would be likely to drag mortgage rates higher. Interest rates have been held at 3.75 per cent since December last year.

The Bank's data also showed that consumers spent a net £900 million on credit cards in July, down from £1 billion in the previous month. Households added an extra £3.8 billion to their savings accounts, a slowdown from June's increase of £6.2 billion.

London Stock Exchange explores 'tokenised' share trading

James Hurley Assistant Business Editor

Investors could soon have another way to trade in equity markets as the London Stock Exchange Group plans to launch "tokenised" UK shares to expand global access to London-listed stocks.

LSEG will partner with Payward, owner of the Kraken crypto exchange, in its latest push to embrace crypto assets, after announcing in February that it would build a blockchain-based settlement service.

Tokenisation is essentially the on-the-blockchain representation of an asset or value. Blockchain is a secure, decentralised digital ledger, or database, which is best known for underpinning crypto assets including bitcoin. Decentralisation removes the need for a main or "centralised" repository and could improve the efficiency of trading.

Proponents of tokenisation say it could revolutionise stock markets by allowing shares to be traded around the clock rather than just in trading hours, and settled instantly, boosting liquidity and reducing transaction costs.

The owner of London's main equity markets said the plans would enable shares in UK-listed companies to be represented as blockchain-based tokens, while maintaining the shareholder rights, protections and governance standards that support public markets.

Robinhood, the brokerage firm, has already launched tokenised stocks in the EU, and Coinbase, a crypto exchange, is also making a push into the emerging sector. LSEG recently announced plans to launch LSE 24, a round-the-clock trading venue, in the first half of next year.

As part of the collaboration with Payward, LSEG said it intended to list xStocks, tokenised representations of publicly traded shares, on LSE 24 in 2027, subject to regulatory approval.

"Tokenisation has the potential to change how investors access, and how issuers use, financial markets, but it must develop in a way that preserves the trust, rights and role of regulated markets," said Julia Hoggett, the exchange's boss.

Tokenisation is an increasingly popular buzzword in financial circles amid hopes the technology could revolutionise payments between buyers and sellers. It could also enable consumers to buy assets in fractions — a slice of a gold bar, for example, and there are hopes it could improve difficult transactions such as house buying.

A recent report from the professional services firm PwC predicted tokenised assets would become the "default way in which securities and assets are traded. Advantages of blockchain-based tokens include the ability to set conditions for when the money is released, faster transactions and more efficient markets in areas including debt, equity and commodities."

BlackRock's Larry Fink has said tokenisation could help make equity investment more accessible.

But the World Federation of Exchanges last year called on regulators to clamp down on tokenised stocks, saying they created new risks for investors and could harm market integrity.

Arjun Sethi, co-chief executive of Payward, said: "Tokenisation hasn't just widened who can reach a market, it changes how the market itself works, how shares are issued, how they trade, how they settle, and how freely they move once they do."

William Kay ***Tempus***
Buy, sell or hold: today's best share tips

Dividend king has winning formula

LONDONMETRIC

Market cap	Dividend yield
£4.6bn	6.6%

Andrew Jones is no stranger to strong opinions. "In my view it's best to date an office, not marry it," he once said. "I didn't like offices, even before Covid or work from home. They're like melting ice cubes."

Instead, his LondonMetric Property Reit has a 680-strong, consumer-driven portfolio that takes in Primark and Tesco stores, Thorpe Park and Alton Towers theme parks, Travelodge and Premier Inn hotels. Altogether they produced £455 million net rent last year, nearly all of which was naturally passed on as dividends under the real estate investment trust (Reit) rules.

In 2010 Jones, a career estate agent and property asset manager who had become a British Land director, raised £175 million to start LondonMetric. His initial plan was to buy retail parks that had been starved of management and capital.

Now he uses the company's shares, trading near net asset value (NAV), to buy smaller Reits trading below NAV, where he can also eliminate overheads. After several large deals, LondonMetric's equity is now worth £4.6 billion and, with the help of £3 billion borrowings, owns properties worth £7.6 billion.

The company claims to be the UK's leading NNN Reit, which means its leases are charged net of property taxes, building insurance and maintenance, leaving tenants to pay all that. From investors' point of view, that makes cash flow and dividends more predictable because these variable costs are out of the equation. "The rent is the rent and there is no deduction," said Jones.

His fondness for listening to customers makes him lean towards tenants who listen to their own customers. That, plus his own early career, explains the bias towards retail and consumer industries.

While this can present problems as consumer spending ebbs and flows, it means Jones has the flexibility to respond to wider trends such as the shift from physical to online shopping. Although he admires the retailers Next and Marks & Spencer, LondonMetric's three biggest tenants are Ramsay Health Care, Merlin Entertainment and Travelodge.

Much rides on his continuing ability to spot long-term trends. His importance to the business has led the firm to take out a £5 million key-person insurance on his life.

His favourite mottos are ABC, always be compounding, in terms of interest or profits; and CCC, collect, compound and compress. That has meant selling unwanted offices, homes and lower-yield retail parks that LondonMetric has accumulated along the way.

In partnership with Schroder Reit, LondonMetric is due to complete its latest takeover, Picton Property Income. The deal will add £320 million to LondonMetric's portfolio, mainly warehouses, distribution and industrial assets, plus £24 million cash.

While the dividend yield has been rock solid, to avoid corporation tax on Reits' qualifying property rental business at least 90 per cent of net taxable property profits have to be paid out. That has two effects. It means there is little scope to keep profits back to smooth future dividends and it is harder to build up reserves other than from debt or fresh equity. Tenant insolvencies and higher interest rates are an ever-present threat, in theory at least.

But that comes back to Jones's judgment, borne out by the fact that over the years LondonMetric has suffered only a handful of its tenants failing. And a 12th successive year of rising dividends is testament to a well-managed profit trend.

There is a question mark over how far its growth trajectory can depend on a constant flow of acquisitions supported by falling interest rates, but Jones insisted there were plenty of Reits ripe for plucking.

"The goal isn't just to get bigger," he said, "but to become more efficient. Scale has reduced our cost of debt and opened access to diverse funding sources."

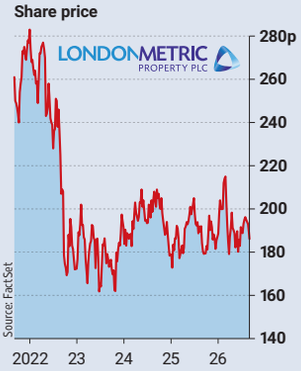
At 7.7 per cent, the firm has the sector's lowest EPRA (European Public Real Estate Association) cost ratio, measuring administrative and operational overheads as a percentage of gross rental income.

Shore Capital's analysts said: "LondonMetric has been able to consistently deliver growth in rents, earnings and dividends."

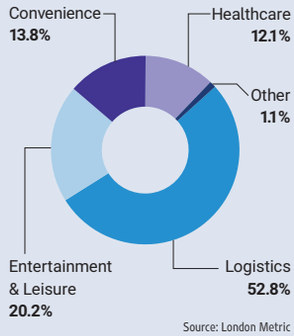
ADVICE Buy
WHY The shares trade off an experienced operator to produce a well-established business model

Rental heath

Share price



£7.6bn portfolio



Source: London Metric

Gulf clashes lift BP to top of the leaderboard

MARKET REPORT

London equity markets got off to a shaky start for September after America carried out further strikes on Iranian targets amid an escalation in fighting over the Strait of Hormuz (Robert Miller writes).

The renewed clashes in the Middle East have heightened worries that borrowing costs may need to rise to contain price pressures and energy costs in particular. As so often since the conflict began in February, oil played a large part in yesterday's trading. Brent crude, the global benchmark, was 4.3 per cent higher at $94.28 a barrel, comfortably lifting **BP** to the top of the FTSE 100 leaderboard after a rise of 26¾p, or 5.2 per cent, to 541¼p, while **Shell** rose 88p, or 2.6 per cent, to £34.32½p.

Reasonable though the gains were the FTSE 100 ended 34.98 points, or 0.3 per cent, lower at 10,789.28, its third negative session in the past four trading days and the lowest closing value since August 20. Other companies on the up with investors, and thus limiting losses, included **Tesco**. Shares in the supermarket chain rose 14¼p, or 3.1 per cent, to 471½p, taking their gain over the past month to 2.2 per cent. Yesterday's impetus was provided by the announcement that Clubcard members can collect points when they charge their electric vehicles at Be.EV charging bays.

While black gold, the term often used to describe oil, was lifting energy firms, the real precious metal was having the opposite effect. The price of gold was 1.9 per cent lower in London, trading at $4,393.50 an ounce, leaving **Endeavour Mining** down 258p, or 5.4 per cent, at £44.84 and Mexico's **Fresnillo** down 154p, or 4.9 per cent, to £30.16.

It was a similar theme on the FTSE 250, which shed a fairly hefty 417.50 points, or 1.7 per cent, to 24,521.29 with commodity companies again pulling the index lower. **Hochschild Mining** fell 41p, or 6.1 per cent, to 626½p while **Atalaya Mining** was down 68p, or 6.1 per cent, at £10.41. **Pan African Resources** lost 8p, or 5.9 per cent, to 128¼p.

Off the commodity track, **Oxford Biomedica** suffered the worst fall on the more UK-focused index with a drop of 77p, or 14.7 per cent, to 447p. Investors in the cell and gene therapy specialist were spooked by news that after several takeover offers from the Swedish private equity firm EQT it might still be open to a take-private deal.

Wall Street report

Indices were lower as another round of US military strikes on Iran sent oil prices higher, stoking worries about high inflation and deepening a bond market sell-off. Tech stocks were among the biggest fallers, leaving Microsoft down 1.2 per cent and Advanced Micro Devices 2.4 per cent lower over fears of an AI overspend. The S&P 500 shed 54.67 points, or 0.7 per cent, to 7,631.47 and the Nasdaq lost 271.12 points, or 1 per cent, to 26,099.77. The Dow Jones industrial average lost 419.02 points, or 0.8 per cent, to 52,766.88.

The day's biggest movers

Company	Change
BP	5.2%
Reckit Benckiser	4.4%
Rentokil Initial	3.2%
Tesco	3.1%
Airtel Africa	2.8%
Rolls-Royce	-4.6%
Fresnillo	-4.9%
Weir	-4.9%
Antofagasta	-5.2%
Endeavour Mining	-5.4%

Tesco Clubcard members can earn points while charging their electric vehicles

NEWS IN BRIEF

Production dips in August

Growth in UK manufacturing slipped to a five-month low last month as smaller firms came under pressure. The S&P Global UK manufacturing PMI survey, watched closely by economists, showed a reading of 51.7 in August, down slightly from 51.9 in July. Any reading above 50.0 indicates activity is growing, while a score below 50 shows contraction. August's reading marks the 10th month in a row that overall activity has grown, but at the slowest rate since March.

Employment in the sector rose for the fifth month and at its fastest in two years. But smaller producers saw output and demand for new work declining, while medium and larger manufacturers saw expansion. Rob Dobson, director at S&P Global Market Intelligence, said: "There are still signs for continued optimism, however, as manufacturers reported a positive outlook for the year ahead. Business confidence rose to a six-month high and job creation was the strongest for two years."

Matt Swannell, chief economic adviser to the Item Club, cautioned that manufacturers may be facing a "difficult" few months as the Iran war continues. "Higher energy costs will be a particular headwind, with a recent resurgence in oil and gas prices feeding through into higher business costs," he said. "The conflict in the Middle East remains a key source of uncertainty for business."

Weak growth forecast

The latest forecast from the British Chambers of Commerce says that while the economy was more resilient in the second quarter than expected, higher energy and business costs are likely to keep growth weak this year and next. It said it expected GDP in 2026 to grow by 1 per cent, compared with 0.9 per cent in the previous forecast, then 1 per cent next year, rising to 1.3 per cent in 2028. Faced with a number of domestic cost pressures as well as global headwinds, business investment is now expected to fall by 0.2 per cent this year, followed by a rise of 0.4 per cent in 2027 and 1.2 per cent in 2028.

Irn-Bru maker's new chair

The maker of Irn-Bru and Rubicon has hired a former Sainsbury's finance chief as chairman. AG Barr said Darren Shapland, 59, would head its board with immediate effect. Susan Barratt, 61, had been sitting in after Mark Allen, 67, left in January to focus on turnaround efforts at Hilton Foods. Shapland has led retail, leisure and consumer-facing businesses. He was chief executive at Carpetright. He is chairman at Hollywood Bowl and a non-executive at JD Sports Fashion having been chairman at Poundland and Topps Tiles. He described AG Barr as "a business with a truly unique heritage and powerful brands".

No 10 aide joins Anthropic

A former adviser to the government has joined Anthropic, the artificial intelligence start-up, to lead its international policy team. Matt Clifford has been hired by the developer of the Claude chatbot to manage its engagement with governments outside North America. Clifford previously served as Sir Keir Starmer's adviser on AI and as Rishi Sunak's representative at the 2023 AI safety summit at Bletchley Park. He said: "Countries everywhere want real agency over how this technology is built and used, and my job is to make Anthropic a genuine partner in that — in Europe, Asia and beyond."

Business

EQUITY PRICES

Dividend yields Please note dividend yields are supplied by ICE Data Services. The yield is the sum of a company's annual 12-month dividend payments divided by the last day's closing share price.
12-month high and low High/low prices for UK equities and investment trusts are based on intra-day figures.

Automobiles & Part

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
86¾	33	Aston Martin Lag	33¼	-¼	...	-0.7

Banking & Finance

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
265	177½	**Aberdeen Group**‡	245	-7¼	6.0	11.3
1¼	0⅝	Acuity RM♦	0¾		...	-3.5
4128	2624	**Admiral**	3936	-88	3.6	16.0
662½	414⅜	AJ Bell	606	-8	2.4	23.6
28761⅛	22372¾	AON Corp	23952⅜	-1	1.0	...
1100	765	Arbuthnot♦‡	800	+5	6.9	7.3
276½	145⅞	Ashmore Group	218⅝	-5¾	7.7	18.0
2126½	1590½	Australia & NZ	1973½	+7¼	5.8	19.2
740⅝	590⅝	**Aviva**	731¾	+1⅜	5.5	27.2
1122	690	Banco Santander	1076	-6	1.5	13.8
554⅛	353½	**Barclays**‡	486⅛	-10½	2.4	11.1
17	4	Blue Star Capital♦	5¼		...	-2.7
710	613	BP Marsh & Ptnrs♦	680		5.3	5.1
351¾	212	Bridgepoint Grp	311⅝	-11	3.0	62.3
378	264⅝	Chesnara	370	-6	6.2	-73.3
496	349	City of London Grp	482	-9	6.8	16.3
556⅛	318⅜	Close Bros	414¾	+2¼	...	-6.2
753	203	CMC Markets	732		1.9	26.6
2998	2057	Deutsche Bank	2943½	-8½	2.9	10.9
93	73⅞	EFG-Hermes Hldgs	73⅞	+¼	0.9	...
240¼	136	EPE Special Opps♦	211		...	8.7
85	52	Fiske♦	67½		1.7	5.9
92	80	Foresight Ventures VCT	83		4.3	15.5
4700	2230	Georgia Capital	4300	-100	...	2.7
57	43¼	Hansard Global	53½	+½	8.3	41.2
230	194	Helios U/W♦	227½		4.4	7.8
1904	1257⅛	**Hiscox**‡	1868	+26	2.1	14.0
1610	946¼	**HSBC**‡	1533⅜	+5	3.6	17.2
1956	1016	**IG Group**‡	1378	-22	3.1	9.5
200	90⅞	Impax Asset Mgmt♦	108⅝	-5	9.2	6.8
2340	1424⅞	**ICG**	1947	-75	4.5	11.7
145¾	115⅝	Intl Public P'ship‡	138	-2	6.4	-8.7
690	499⅜	**Investec**‡	658	-5	5.9	8.5
78	60	Investment Co	77	-½	...	...
75	48	IP Group	69¾	-2¾	1.8	9.6
24	6	Jarvis Securities♦	7		50.0	2.2
214½	113⅜	Jupiter Fund Mgmt‡	165⅝	-4⅝	3.6	8.6
700	549	Lancashire Hldgs‡	625	+9	2.7	7.0
318⅛	217¼	**Legal & General**‡	290¼	-3⅛	7.5	29.1
13620	6905	**Lion Finance Group**	13430	+10	2.4	9.5
358	223	Liontrust Asset Mgmt	304½	-13	6.2	19.8
61	35	Livermore Invs Grp♦	37⅜		8.4	16.9
117⅞	77⅜	**Lloyds Banking**‡	110½	+⅝	3.6	15.8
22	14	LMS Capital	15⅝		25.6	...
10140	6684	**London Stock Exchange**‡	8836	-164	1.8	37.1
367⅛	247	**M&G**	346	-5	5.9	27.5
327¼	154¼	Man Group‡	301	-8	4.2	26.5
38¾	20	Manx Financial Grp♦	24	-1	2.1	4.4
10	1¼	Marechale Capital♦	5		...	-6.1
186⅜	98¼	Metro Bank	170	-3	...	21.8
2621¼	1864⅝	National Australia	2034⅞	-7⅛	4.4	17.4
726	500¼	**NatWest Group**‡	682¾	+3⅜	5.1	12.8
833⅞	438⅜	PayPoint‡	645	+13	6.2	10.9
1238	910¼	**Prudential**	1000½	-17½	2.1	8.8
1¼	0⅜	Quantum Blockchain♦	0⅜		...	-1.8
209	150¾	Quilter‡	189¾	-4⅜	3.4	21.3
2500	1580	Rathbones Group	1706	-6	5.9	15.8
327	245	Rockwood Strategic	323½	+½	...	0.0
2458½	1620	S & U	2000		5.8	10.2
3	0¼	Sancus Lending♦	1	-¼	...	6.6
59⅛	42¼	Schroder REIT‡	42½	-1⅜	8.4	...
599½	358⅝	**Schroders**	584		3.8	17.1
1575½	1038¾	**St James's Place**‡	1166½	-19½	1.5	11.7
2278	1351½	**Standard Chart'd**‡	2169	-8	2.4	15.0
948½	615	**Standard Life**	921	-19	6.0	-195.5
6347⅛	4284⅝	Sun Life Canada‡	5708	-83¼	3.6	...
6¾	2¾	Tavistock Invs♦	3		3.4	2.5
5200	3615	TBC Bank Grp‡	4950	-100	5.2	6.9
1¾	0¼	Tern♦	1¼	+⅛	...	-1.4
60	40⅛	Time Finance♦	57⅜		...	9.1
0⅜	0⅛	Tooru♦	0¼		...	-1.9
4	1½	Truetide♦	3¼		...	-5.8
132	75	Vanquis Banking Gp	81½	+⅞	...	25.5
2800	2000	Volvere♦	2150		...	11.4
7239⅝	5453⅛	Wells Fargo‡	6387	+15⅛	2.3	...
2275⅜	1755¾	Westpac Bkg Corp	1816	-10¼	4.5	17.1
31¾	23	Worsley Investors	28¼		...	...
57550	49947¼	Zurich Insurance	54206½	+110	5.0	18.6

Construction & Property

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
357	181	Alumasc♦	227½		4.9	8.8
6⅝	4⅜	Aseana Properties	5⅛		...	1.3
2½	1¼	Built Cybernetics♦	1⅞		...	-190.0
973	579½	Balfour Beatty	872	-12½	1.7	16.6
410¼	235⅜	**Barratt Redrow**	312⅝	-5⅝	5.5	23.0
2890	1715	Bellway	2126	-34	3.4	16.0
4442	2796	Berkeley	3472	-98	...	10.5
1208	800½	Big Yellow Grp	844	-33½	5.6	...
460	233	Billington Hldgs♦	407½	-2½	2.7	39.2
236	133½	Boot (Henry)	154	+8	5.1	8.8
374¼	271⅜	Breedon	341	-14	4.5	14.1
451⅝	318⅝	**British Land**	419⅜	-6¾	5.5	...
2900	2500	Cardiff Property	2750		1.1	20.7
2196	1469⅜	Derwent London	1998	-50	4.1	...
5½	4⅛	DCI Advisors♦	4¾		...	-2.8
19½	11	First Property♦‡	13½		1.9	7.5
75	29	Fletcher King♦	42½		5.3	28.7
62	31¾	Foxtons Group‡	37¼	-1⅛	3.1	8.7
640	407½	Galliford Try Hldgs	605	-3	3.3	18.0
391½	241	Genuit Group‡	268	-8	4.8	14.7
435	221	Gleeson (MJ)	270	-9	4.1	10.0
1063	788⅝	Grafton Grp Units	1030¼	-11⅝	3.7	14.7
202¾	149½	Grainger	168¼	-5½	5.0	6.1
377	270	Great Portland Est	332⅝	-5	2.5	0.0
391¾	263⅜	Hammerson	372¼	-5¼	4.9	...
185	116¾	Harworth Group	176⅝	-¼	1.0	60.9
400	215½	Heath (Samuel)♦‡	245		5.3	30.6
236¼	180⅝	Helical	200		1.3	41.4
143¾	82⅞	Ibstock‡	84⅜	-4⅜	2.4	...
161½	112	James Halstead♦	135	-1⅜	6.6	13.9
3518	1238	Keller‡	3030	+10	2.7	15.0
8728	8565¼	Kingspan Group	8623⅛		0.6	27.2
726	522½	**Land Securities**	671	-15½	6.1	...
216¼	175¼	**LondonMetric Prop**‡	184	-5	6.8	...
20	4¼	Macau Prop Opp Fd	4⅞	+⅛	...	-0.3
184¼	124	Marshalls	162⅛	-4½	4.3	28.4
101⅝	66	Michelmersh Brick♦	74½		6.2	18.5
1	0⅜	Mindflair♦	0⅜		...	-1.3
5730	3915	Morgan Sindall	4254	-146	3.8	11.4
10200	8350	Mountview Estates	8750		6.0	16.8
85	65¾	NewRiver REIT	78⅞	-2⅜	8.5	...
226	160	Palace Capital	185½	-3½	8.1	41.2
320	261	Panther Securities♦	290		4.1	11.8
1552	947⅜	**Persimmon**	1150	-28½	5.2	12.9
24	15	Plaza Centers	14½		...	-0.1
109⅝	87⅜	Primary Health Props	93¾	-1¾	7.8	...
33⅜	28	Real Estate Inv♦	31¼		4.8	-62.4
849½	554½	Safestore	578	-10	5.3	...
1142	791½	Savills‡	1022	-48	2.3	19.7
5½	0¼	Secure Prop Dev & Inv♦	0½		...	-0.1
997⅜	603	**Segro**‡	953¼	-8	3.3	...
155⅛	124⅛	Shaftesbury Capital‡	145⅜	-1¾	3.0	7.8
10¾	6¾	SIG	9⅜		...	-1.7
153	105	SigmaRoc♦	125⅛	-⅞	...	17.2
113	86¾	Sirius Real Estate	93¾	-4¼	5.8	7.2
140	106	Smart (J)	120	+5	2.7	9.2
23¾	16	Steppe Cement♦	21½		...	19.3
116⅞	74⅛	Taylor Wimpey	83	-2⅛	5.0	29.6
139	104	Town Centre	128		3.9	...
723½	493⅜	Travis Perkins	632	-19½	1.8	-7.6
175	132¼	**Tritax Big Box**‡	154¼	-3⅛	5.3	...
729½	442¼	Unite Group	492	-18½	7.7	...
746⅜	220	Vistry Group	291⅜	-11¼	...	6.9
434⅜	312	Workspace Group	370¼	-7¾	7.1	...
930	730	Wynnstay Props♦	905		3.1	12.6

Consumer Goods

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
229	117⅜	AEP Plantations	202	-3	3.0	11.8
30	17⅝	Airea♦	27		3.7	10.6
2359	1729½	**AB Foods**	2041	-11	3.1	14.4
715⅜	588	Barr (AG)	592	-4	3.2	14.0
5326	3677	**British Amer Tob**	4174	+45	5.9	11.9
1376½	976	**Burberry Group**	1070	-14	...	...
173¼	85⅜	C&C Group	93½	-2¼	5.3	...
5⅞	3	Capital Metals♦	4		...	-33.4
460	271	Churchill China♦	360	-10	5.8	9.1
5195	3270	**Coca-Cola HBC**	4594	+24	2.2	20.7
1515¾	821	Colefax♦	1440		0.4	10.2
5810	4775	Cranswick	5340	-50	2.1	18.0
2071	1295½	**Diageo**	1671½	-37½	2.2	29.0
0¼	0	Distil♦	0		...	-0.6
1918	1160	Evans (M.P.)♦	1802	+4	3.3	11.2
149½	114½	Fevara	138½	-6½	1.7	6.0
23540	14070	**Games Workshop**‡	18310	-110	3.1	29.3
2185⅜	1147⅞	Glanbia‡	1952⅞	+47½	2.0	36.1
307½	191⅛	Greencore	260	-6¾	1.0	19.7
73	4⅝	Headlam#	10½		...	-0.1
840	447⅞	Hilton Food	630½	-5½	5.6	7.2
3632	2476	**Imperial Brands**‡	2551	+24	6.5	10.2
7646⅜	5567¾	Kerry Group	7212	+9⅛	1.7	21.0
214⅛	106¼	McBride	196¼	-9¾	1.5	10.1
260	85	Mulberry Group♦	255	+5	...	-19.6
1240	880	Nichols♦‡	1170	+30	3.3	19.9
374	252	Norcros	323	-3	3.5	...
388⅝	309	Origin Ents♦	382½		3.9	9.0
1	0¼	PACSCo♦	0⅜		...	-0.0
138	47⅛	Portmeirion♦	53		...	-1.2
1½	0½	Provexis♦	1		...	-52.5
114	65⅝	PZ Cussons	103	-⅝	3.6	21.9
138	92	REA	110	-1	...	-212.7
210	155	Tandem♦	180		1.7	11.6
320	220	The Character Grp♦	315		2.2	-46.7
82⅞	5	Ukrproduct Grp♦	7½	+¾	...	-17.4
5542⅛	3644	**Unilever**‡	4811	+35	3.4	13.0
76½	19½	Victoria♦	56⅝	-⅜	...	-0.2

Engineering

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
59⅛	10	Assoc Brit Eng	20		...	-6.9
2180	1458	Avon Technologies‡	1800	-54	1.0	69.8
1527	902⅜	**Babcock**‡	1024	-32½	0.7	24.3
2360	1529	**BAE Systems**	2017	-27	1.9	29.3
1500	500	Braime A N/V♦	1250		1.3	6.6
2490	1376	Braime Group♦	2350		0.7	12.5
550	350	Caffyns	500		2.0	-12.3
0⅜	0⅛	Cap XX Ld♦	0⅛		...	-3.4
340	202¼	Castings	306	-2	6.0	17.6
27	12⅜	Checkit♦	20		...	-7.7
650¾	446½	Chemring Group‡	532	-18½	1.5	29.9
55	28⅛	Chesterfield Spec Cyl♦	37	-½	...	-41.1
1538	881⅛	Cohort♦‡	1164	-62	1.5	22.3
626	195	Dialight	574	+20	...	...
15	5¾	Feedback♦	6⅞		...	-0.3
1270	463⅛	Gooch & Housego♦	1205	-5	1.1	88.0
28500	9292⅝	Goodwin	17860	-600	1.8	24.2
4902	3194	**Halma**	3528	-104	0.7	35.8
3220	1994	Hill & Smith	2900	-95	...	28.2
3	1¼	Image Scan♦	2¾	+¼	...	-13.3
3166	2216	**IMI**‡	3054	-58	1.2	24.6
6760	3480	Judges Sci.♦	4105	+80	2.8	49.6
90	34	LPA♦	77½		...	-29.4
685	409⅞	**Melrose**‡	494¾	-20⅜	1.5	17.1
261	179¾	Morgan Advanced	239½	-1½	5.1	31.9
405	200	Mpac♦	342½		...	-10.8
1800	1120	MS Intl♦‡	1700	+5	1.5	25.2
3318	1682	Oxford Instruments	2724	-116	0.9	32.2
2413⅜	1779⅛	Phillips Elec	1966⅛	-5⅜	3.7	-45.9
4⅛	1	PipeHawk♦	1⅞		...	-2.7
5490	3110	Renishaw	4860	-245	1.6	42.2
1586	990	**Rolls-Royce**‡	1459¼	-71	0.8	21.0
489¼	286⅜	Rotork‡	485		1.7	35.1
105	60	SDI Group♦	89½	-1½	...	19.0
318⅛	161	Senior	294	-½	0.7	-288.2
2141¾	2074¼	SKF Group	2091⅝		2.9	31.5
2754⅛	2088	**Smiths**	2557	-55	1.8	29.8
215	135	Solid State♦	189½	+1	1.5	26.3
250	170	Somero Enter♦	240	-2½	3.2	17.1
8050	5950	**Spirax Group**	6910	-200	2.5	31.2
7½	3½	Tanfield♦	4¼		...	-4.2
320	240	Thorpe FW♦	270	+10	2.7	12.4
142¾	45	Transense Tech♦	45½		...	4.9
507½	350	Vesuvius	383¼	-5⅜	6.2	18.2
710	325	Volex‡	594	-30	0.8	22.8
3580	2254	**Weir**	2706	-140	1.6	28.3
2060	843	XP Power	1776	-10	...	-42.3

Health

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
284½	187	Advanced Medical♦	280½	-1½	1.0	60.7
12⅛	5	Allergy Therapeutics♦	5⅝	-⅛	...	-6.7
8	0⅞	CelLBxHealth♦	1¼		...	-0.2
580	391⅛	Anpario♦	535	-1	2.3	13.3
15732	9892	**AstraZeneca**‡	11962	-8	2.0	24.5
3½	1⅝	Cambridge Nutri Sci♦	1⅞		...	2.6
259¼	193	**Convatec**‡	229¾	+2¼	2.4	36.2
34	20	Potter & Moore♦‡	22		2.5	7.2
116⅞	72	Eco Animal Health♦	98½		...	30.2
32	21¾	EKF Diagnostics♦	25	-¼	...	53.2
10½	0¼	Futura Medical♦	0⅜		...	-0.1
3228¾	1943	Genus	2320	-28	1.4	79.2
2282	1440¼	**GSK**‡	1871½	+18	3.7	13.3
0¼	0⅛	Gunsynd♦	0⅛		...	-2.1
416⅛	274⅜	**Haleon**‡	369⅞	+1¾	2.0	19.9
1865	1187	Hikma Pharma‡	1615	-1	3.9	12.0
266	150½	Hutchmed China♦	177	-4	...	4.5
19⅜	2¼	ImmuPharma♦	3⅝	+⅛	...	-9.7
32	12¼	Inspiration Health♦	19¼	+¾	...	-16.6
15	6¼	IXICO♦	7½	-¼	...	-4.1
1	0⅜	Thalia Therapeutics♦	0⅝		...	-3.9
76¾	53⅞	NIOX Group♦	68		2.3	40.2
CHF132.48	96.03	Novartis	CHF130.96	+7.70	2.8	42.9
962	427	Oxford Biomedica	447	-77	...	-16.6
0¾	0¼	Physiomics♦	0½		...	-3.0
4⅜	1¼	Proteome Sciences♦	1⅜	-⅛	...	-1.4
6522⅞	3664	**Reckitt Benck**‡	5360	+228	4.0	11.4
29⅞	10⅜	RUA Life Sci♦	27	-½	...	-115.9
40	9½	Sareum Holdings♦	35	+1½	...	-14.6
1441½	1046	**Smith & Neph**	1070	+7½	2.7	20.1
256½	140¾	Spire Healthcare	237	+2	0.6	57.8
14	5	Talisman Metals♦	7		...	2.0
0⅞	0⅛	ValiRx♦	0⅛		...	-0.3

Industrials

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
79⅞	58⅛	Accsys Tech♦	69	-2⅜	...	30.2
4780½	3665⅛	BASF	4538¾	+33⅛	4.2	29.1
4606¾	2268½	Bayer	4172⅛	+1¼	0.2	-13.2
98⅛	73⅛	Coats Group	79	-2¼	3.1	18.1
3520¼	2437	**Croda**‡	3360	-99	3.3	75.7
540	230	Cropper (James)♦	510	-10	...	16.6
195⅜	136	Elementis‡	173¾	-⅜	1.9	-30.2
110	6¼	Hardide♦	88¼	-3¼	...	...
3775	2095	International Paper‡	2745	-165	5.0	-6.9
3245¼	2224	Johnson Matthey	2280	+4	4.5	-29.9
1058	660	Mondi‡	860¾	-9⅜	1.4	26.9
169⅞	110	Robinson♦	127½		4.7	9.4
1002¼	597	Swire Pacific	995¾	-6¼	3.8	48.7
11	5½	Symphony Enviro♦	7		...	-6.5
124	16¾	Synthomer	102	+3⅝	...	-1.1
2858¼	2026⅝	Takeda Pharma	2696⅞	+34¼	3.5	-60.4
860⅛	515	Victrex	841		7.1	26.3
430	320	Wynnstay♦	370	+9	4.9	37.4
479⅞	318½	Zotefoams	446½	+1	1.8	9.6

Leisure

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
451	231	Accesso Tech♦	313	+11	...	15.2
260	160	Celtic♦	185		...	5.2
221⅝	164	Domino's Pizza‡	208¾	-3⅝	5.5	13.8
915⅝	500⅜	**Entain**‡	515¼	+2	3.9	-4.9
60¼	19¾	Evoke	44⅞		...	-0.4
51¾	29	Gaming Realms♦	29⅞	+⅜	...	14.7
310	210	Heavitree♦	305		2.2	5.6
244	130	Heavitree A♦	195		3.4	3.6
$175.70	116.00	**InterCont'l Hotels**‡	$155.90	-6.75	1.2	31.8
301½	223½	Mitch & Butlers	280	-1½	...	9.4
293	129⅜	On The Beach	184¼	-10¼	2.2	33.5
144¼	86	Rank Group	100⅝	-2⅝	3.5	15.7
219⅜	137¼	SSP	197¼	-3¾	2.2	-21.2
0⅝	0¼	Bow Street Group♦	0⅜		...	-0.3
865	530½	Wetherspoon JD	840	-11½	1.4	14.0
3302	2098	**Whitbread**	2387	-72	4.1	19.4

Media

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
76⅛	51⅛	Aeorema Comms♦	64½		4.1	51.2
29	18	Altitude Group♦	23		...	-92.0
115	70¼	Arcontech Group♦	78½		5.1	11.1
828¾	418⅝	**Autotrader**‡	505⅝	-22⅜	2.3	14.8
690	435	Bloomsbury Pub	622	-21	2.6	18.8
3½		Caledonian Hldgs♦	1¼		...	-0.1
60	40	Catalyst Media♦	42½		...	23.1
0⅝	0⅛	Catenai♦	0⅛		...	-2.6
20	9	Ebiquity♦	9⅝	+¼	...	-0.9
776	262¼	Future	303⅜	-5¾	5.6	4.8
154	60⅝	GlobalData	77¼	-6¾	1.9	17.5
110	44	IG Design Group♦	97½		1.0	-0.8
1000	719	**Informa**‡	888⅜	-13	2.5	...
87⅜	65¾	ITV	70⅜	-⅝	7.1	11.9
201½	98½	ME Group	124⅜	-5⅜	6.7	8.3
0⅛	0⅛	Mediazest♦	0⅛		...	13.8
27	12	Mission Group♦	21		...	-1.0
220¼	139¾	Mony Group‡	197¾	-5¾	6.4	12.9
2341⅜	1624⅜	News Corp A	2269⅞	+3¼	0.7	...
2615¼	1891½	News Corp B	2532¾	-8⅞	0.6	...
439½	217	Next 15 Group♦	306	-11½	5.0	-10.2
1337	874¾	**Pearson**‡	1226	-7½	2.1	23.9
4½	3	Primorus Inv♦	3⅜		...	5.0
73¾	40⅛	Reach‡	42¼	-⅝	13.9	-1.0
59	40	React♦	40½	+½	...	-27.9
3575	1991	**Relx**‡	2632	-40	2.6	23.4
748¼	391⅜	Rightmove	498⅜	-11¾	2.2	17.7
270	130	SpaceandPeople♦	131	-4	...	6.1
125	95⅝	STV Group	110	-2	...	-10.2
444	170½	System1 Group♦	335		1.8	32.2
5008⅛	5008⅛	21st Cent Fox A	5008⅛		0.9	...
3357⅝	3306¼	21st Cent Fox B	3357⅝		1.3	...
369	230	Wilmington	272	+2	4.3	21.1
412⅝	218½	WPP	370⅛	-12½	4.1	7.4
71½	40	Zinc Media♦	56½		...	-5.5

Natural Resources

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
0⅛	0	ADM Energy#	0		...	1.2
17⅞	8⅛	H-Power♦	10⅝	-⅛	...	-4.4
89⅜	36¾	Afentra♦	76¾	+3½	...	-74.2
0	0	Arkadian Strat Metals♦	0		...	-1.0
0¼	0⅛	Alien Metals♦	0⅛		...	-15.0
2⅞	0⅞	Aminex	1⅝	-⅛	...	-17.8
8924	3413¼	Anglo Amer Plat	6454⅝	+159¼	7.1	24.0
4321	2215	**Anglo Amer**‡	4113	-156	0.7	-16.8
435	173⅛	Anglo Asian Mng♦	407½	-17½	0.7	35.6
4475	2115	**Antofagasta**	3828	-211	1.5	38.4
1¼	0⅜	Arc Minerals♦	0¾		...	-1.6
2⅜	1¼	Ariana Resources♦	1½		...	-150.0
0⅞	0¼	Arkle Resources♦	0¾		...	-10.2
2¼	0⅞	Asiamet Resources♦	1⅝		...	-14.0
1133	508	Atalaya Mine	1041	-68	1.0	20.0
4¾	2½	Beacon Energy♦	3¼		...	-0.8
13	4	Beowulf Mining♦	10½		...	-3.1

PRICES

Major indices

New York	
Dow Jones	52766.88 (-419.02)
Nasdaq	26099.77 (-271.12)
S&P 500	7631.47 (-54.67)
Tokyo	
Nikkei 225	66215.34 (-96.59)
Hong Kong	
Hang Seng	25329.73 (-237.26)
Amsterdam	
Amsterdam AEX	1101.92 (-3.85)
Sydney	
Australia AO	9260.90 (-10.50)
Frankfurt	
DAX	25970.11 (-288.00)
Singapore	
Singapore Straits	5710.37 (-44.99)
Brussels	
Brussels BEL20	5830.29 (-3.99)
Paris	
Paris CAC	8301.85 (-32.65)
Zurich	
Zurich SMI	14334.79 (+48.36)
Zurich DJ Euro Stoxx 50	6368.98 (-51.18)
London	
FTSE100	10789.28 (-34.98)
FTSE250	24521.29 (-417.50)
FTSE350	5878.68 (-27.85)
FTSE Eurotop 100	5002.46 (-19.13)
FTSE All Share	5814.48 (-27.89)
FTSE Non Financials	6376.69 (-26.48)
TechMark Focus	9382.37 (-247.52)
US$	1.3538 (-0.0019)
Euro	1.1675 (+0.0003)
SDR	0.9891 (-0.0006)
CPI Jul (2015=100)	142.9
RPI Jul (1987=100)	419.1
RPIX Jul (1987=100)	412.2

London Financial Futures

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol	Open Int
Long Gilt	26-Sep	85.42	85.45	85.12	85.6	2889	9949
	26-Dec	85.82	85.82	85.05	85.51	319976	1269139
	27-Mar				85.48	0	1
3-Mth Sonia Index	26-Jun	96.2525	96.2525	96.25	96.2525	3463	391553
	26-Sep	96.155	96.165	96.145	96.15	102010	444086
	26-Dec	95.89	95.9	95.83	95.86	175395	603303
	27-Mar	95.69	95.695	95.605	95.635	154153	406936
3 Mth Sonia Index	27-Jun	95.59	95.595	95.495	95.515	138969	381854
	27-Sep	95.55	95.555	95.46	95.48	98849	262434
	27-Dec	95.58	95.58	95.475	95.495	115761	304509
3-Mth Euribor	26-Sep	97.365	97.37	97.36	97.365	125001	653506
	26-Dec	97.18	97.18	97.155	97.165	217289	965400
	27-Mar	97.015	97.02	96.98	97	185609	504013
	27-Jun	96.925	96.93	96.885	96.905	188956	530686
	27-Sep	96.895	96.9	96.845	96.875	180540	484208
3-Mth Saron Index	26-Jun	100.05	100.05	100.0475	100.0475	162	69061
	26-Sep	100.055	100.055	100.05	100.05	2231	69052
	26-Dec	100.01	100.01	99.995	100.005	5477	51525
	27-Mar	99.915	99.925	99.9	99.915	4154	40099
	27-Jun	99.805	99.82	99.785	99.81	3584	30842
	27-Sep	99.705	99.72	99.68	99.71	1799	28958
	27-Dec	99.615	99.64	99.595	99.625	2131	22000
FTSE100	26-Sep	10796	10829	10705	10810.5	83282	474139
	26-Dec	10835	10844	10778.5	10878	12	1477
FTSEurofirst 80	26-Sep				8735.8	0	
	26-Dec				8781.4	0	

Tradeweb

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Commodities

Natural Gas $

2.888 -0.047

Light Crude Oil

88.36 +2.6

Crude Oils ($/barrel FOB)

WTI NOV 26	86.09	2.03
WTI DEC 26	83.61	1.54
WTI JAN 27	81.27	1.15
WTI FEB 27	79.17	0.82
WTI MAR 27	77.56	0.68

Products

Fuel Oil	506.05	15.3
Euro Naphtha	787.994	25.536

ICE Futures

Gas Oil

Sep1419.5-1419 Jan1165-1164.25
Oct1347-1346.5 Feb1128.5-1128
Nov1276.25-1275.75
Dec1211.5-1211 Volume: 289341

Brent

Nov92.65-92.64 Feb85.17-85.14
Dec89.96-89.94 83.44-83.41
Jan87.36-87.34 Volume: 736001

Cocoa

Sep 4696 -77 Sep 4831 -28
Dec 4805 -54 Dec 4686 -7
Mar 4937 -46 Mar 4937 -46
May 4935 -45 May 4935 -45
Jul 4917 -36 Volume: 59568

Robusta Coffee

Sep 3415 -77 May3415 -69
Nov 3466 -63 Jul 3401 -71
Jan 3460 -58
May 3415 -69 Volume: 51975

White Sugar

Oct533.9 +19.5 Aug528.6 +12.4
Dec532.9 +12.6 Oct521.9 +11.6
May536.1 +12.8
May536.1 +12.8 Volume: 65813

London Grain Futures

LIFFE Wheat (close £/t)

Nov215.5 -0.25 May221.75 +0.5
Jan 217.25 Jul 223.25
Mar 219.25 Volume: 16222

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
0⅛	0	Bezant Resources♦	0⅛		...	12.1
3592	1918	BHP Group	3459	-84	3.7	24.2
14	7⅝	Border & Sthn Pet♦	11¾	-¼	...	-99.4
122½	7⅞	Bougainville	8½		...	-12.7
609⅜	399⅜	**BP**‡	541¼	+26¾	4.6	...
0	0	Buccaneer Energy♦	0		...	-0.6
8¼	1¾	Cadence Minerals♦	5¾	-⅛	...	-11.0
5½	3	Cadogan Energy	3¾		...	-11.3
2900	1250	Caledonia Mining♦‡	1870	-30	2.2	8.9
3⅜	1¾	Caspian Sunrise#	1⅞		...	3.5
244	125¼	Cent Asia Metals♦	174	-4	8.9	-5.5
2¼	1⅛	Chariot Ltd♦	2¼	+⅝	...	...
0	0	Clontarf Energy♦	0		...	-6.2
0½	0¼	Corcel♦	0⅜		...	-2.4
18½	8	Crism Therapeutics♦	11¼	-¼	...	-2.2
300½	145⅞	DRD Gold	206		3.8	17.3
0½	0⅛	ECR Minerals♦	0⅛		...	-2.8
0⅛	0	Empyrean Energy♦	0		...	-0.4
5620	2590	**Endeavour**	4484	-258	2.9	21.7
28	9¾	EnQuest	26	+¾	3.1	...
6	2	Eurasia Mining♦	2¼		...	14.7
2⅜	0⅝	Europa Oil & Gas♦	1⅞		...	-9.2
87¼	27¼	Ferrexpo#	28⅝		...	-4.5
4472	1806	**Fresnillo**‡	3016	-154	3.7	21.7
80	3	Galantas Gold♦	33½	-1	...	-9.1
21½	2⅞	GCM Resources♦	12	-2	...	-17.1
7¼	2½	Gem Diamonds	5⅝	+⅛	...	-0.1
3½	1⅝	Getech♦	3¼		...	-7.9
707¼	281⅞	**Glencore**‡	597⅛	+1½	2.1	...
0½	0⅛	Geo Exploration#	0⅛		...	-4.3
4582¾	2310¼	Gold Fields	3371	-14⅞	4.7	...
21	7¼	Goldplat♦‡	17¾	-½	3.8	29.6
2	0⅜	Goldstone Res♦	0½		...	-0.7
800	270	Greatland Resources♦	601	-68	...	8.8
353¾	176	Griffin Mining♦	287	-3	...	32.1
235	160⅝	Gulf Keystone	197	+5	3.9	38.3
858	286¼	Hochschild	626½	-41	1.1	21.7
553	300	Hunting	415½	+7	2.5	21.5
0⅛	0	Ironveld♦	0		...	-2.4
219¾	57⅞	ITM Power♦	101¾	-3¾	...	-13.7
5¼	2¼	Jubilee Metals♦	2½		...	-3.4
1⅛	0⅜	Karel Diamond Res♦	0¾	+⅛	...	-4.4
2⅛	0⅝	KEFI Gold and Copper♦	1⅛		...	-10.7
325½	178⅜	Kenmare Res	188⅜	-1⅝	...	-0.7
5⅞	1¾	Landore Res♦	2¼	+⅛	...	-2.2
0⅛	0⅛	Lansdowne Resources♦	0⅛		...	-1.3
4⅞	2⅝	Lexington Gold♦	2¾		...	-28.1
19¼	10¼	Metals Exploration♦	16	-½	...	20.6
0¾	0⅛	Nativo Resources♦	0¼		...	-0.2
4½	0½	Nostrum Oil & Gas	0¾		...	-0.0
0½	0¼	Oriole Resources♦	0⅜		...	-16.2
		Ormonde Mining			...	...
41	13¼	Orosur Mining♦	15¼	-⅞	...	...
190⅜	60½	Pan African Res	128¼	-8	1.7	24.3
33⅛	6¾	Pantheon Res♦	11⅜		...	-40.3
27	12½	Parkmead Group♦	23	+½	...	3.4
21⅞	5	Petra Diamonds	5¼	-⅞	...	-0.2
1⅛	0½	Petrel Resources♦	1		...	-4.4
1⅝	0⅝	Petro Matad♦	1		...	-4.6
8½	2¾	Plexus Holdings♦	3¾		...	-1.4
938	678⅞	Porvair	858	+24	0.8	21.8
5⅛	2⅛	Prospex Energy♦	4¼	+½	...	-6.3
5	0⅞	Quadrise♦	0⅞	-⅛	...	-5.4
160	35	Reabold Resources♦	65½	+4	...	-818.8
0	0	Red Rock Res♦	0		...	-0.3
10416¼	5502⅞	Rio Tinto Ltd‡	9381⅞	+141¾	3.7	17.8
9117	4528	**Rio Tinto**‡	7581	-93	4.5	16.7
0½	0⅛	Rome Resources♦	0¼		...	-14.2
375	195	Serabi Gold♦	294	-26	1.7	5.6
302⅜	146	Serica Energy♦	260¾	+5¾	6.1	-27.2
3758½	2553¾	**Shell**‡	3432½	+88	4.4	15.3
7	2¼	Shuka Minerals♦	3⅜		...	-2.5
13	1½	Sound Energy♦	1¾		...	-1.5
27	5½	Star Energy♦	22		...	-3.9
4½	0⅞	Sunda Energy♦	3⅛	+¼	...	-3.1
0	0	Sunrise Resources♦	0		...	-3.3
0		Synergia Energy♦	0		...	0.5
0⅛	0	Tertiary Minerals♦	0⅛		...	-7.0
0⅞	0½	Thor Energy♦	0½		...	-0.6
7066	4293½	Total Eng SE	6647½	+176½	4.5	13.1
0	0	Tower Resources♦	0		...	-0.4
23	3½	Tullow Oil	21½	+1	...	72.6
0	0	UK Oil & Gas♦	0		...	-0.2
13	2⅝	URU Metals♦	4		...	-2.7
9½	2⅛	Vast Resources♦	4	-¼	...	-0.7
9	1⅜	Westmount Energy♦	3¼		...	-8.6
1½	0½	Xtract Resources♦	1		...	-4.3
4⅜	2¼	Zephyr Energy♦	3		...	-7.0

Professional & Support Services

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
5135	2980	4imprint‡	4398	-82	4.1	14.7
615	464	Andrews Sykes♦	575		4.5	13.3
130	103½	BTG Consulting♦	109		4.2	20.6
2898	1981	**Bunzl**	2742	-50	2.7	19.4
416	215	Capita	277	-3½	...	-1.9
49⅞	25	CEPS♦	40½		...	-11.5
165	90	Christie Group♦	161	-1½	2.2	31.7
2581⅛	2000	**Compass**	2278¾	+20¾	2.2	28.0
87	64½	Croma Security♦	71	+1	3.4	12.4
6740	4188	**DCC Energy**	6365	-5	3.4	...
37	15	Diales Grp♦	36		4.2	27.7
7765	4970	**Diploma**	7130	-200	0.9	51.7
840	505	DiscoverIE	779	-34	1.7	25.8
115¼	78⅜	Essentra	108¼	-⅝	1.9	...
3987	2203	**Experian**	2970	-74	1.7	24.4
330	110	FIH Group♦	157½	-15	29.7	3.5
850	588	Hargreaves Servs♦	840	-10	4.8	9.0
5860	3519⅜	**Intertek**	5840	-5	2.8	26.8
250¾	163½	Int'l Workplace	184⅞	-5⅛	0.6	...
172⅛	123¾	Johnson Service	146⅜	-1⅞	3.3	15.7
554	360	Journeo♦	505		...	20.8
263⅝	178⅝	Kier Group	253⅜	-8⅜	3.1	19.8
1170	910	Latham (J)♦	1070		3.4	11.6
3800	2100	London Security♦	3650		2.7	18.8
298	204	LSL Property Servs	275	-3	4.1	16.6
97¾	59¾	Macfarlane	78	+1	4.7	19.5
184	64½	Maintel Holdings♦	68½		...	-5.8
28	15¼	Malvern Intl♦	21½		...	-2.8
460	310	Mears Group	424	-½	4.3	7.6
260	101¼	Michael Page‡	216¾	-5¼	2.2	74.8
214	134¾	Mitie Group	210	+1⅜	2.1	31.8
15¾	0¾	MobilityOne#	6¾		...	-2.1
137	71⅛	Newmark Security♦	108½		...	15.4
260	170	Norman Broadbent♦	204		...	6.4
158	84⅞	Northern Bear♦‡	112½	-5	6.7	3.7
187½	110	NWF Group♦	152½	-½	5.7	8.2
66⅞	42	PCI-PAL♦	66	+3½	...	...
12½	7	Petards♦	10		...	-14.9
12⅞	7	PHSC♦	7¾		...	-2.6
0⅝	0⅛	PowerHouse Energy♦	0¼		...	-3.0
62⅝	41⅜	Record	42½	-½	8.5	10.8
984¾	772	Renew Holdings♦	970	-7	2.1	15.7
507	329⅝	**Rentokil**‡	356⅞	+11¼	2.6	25.9
310	222	Restore♦	291	-2	2.5	-61.9
7	1½	River Global A♦	2½		...	-0.3
30	14	Roebuck Food Group♦	26		...	-9.0
764	536⅞	RS Group	746½	-10	3.1	21.6
150	85	RTC Group♦	95		7.1	6.7
125⅞	68	RWS Holdings♦	122	-3⅜	5.2	-4.5
612	520	Science Group♦	578		1.7	7.7
325¾	212¾	Serco‡	259¼	+¼	1.8	18.0
79⅜	54¼	Smiths News	71	+1⅜	7.8	6.1
27	13¼	Software Circel♦	15½		...	-73.8
52½	36⅝	Staffline Group♦	41⅛	-1⅞	...	10.5
301	132¼	SThree	295	-6	4.8	21.5
350	146	Synectics♦	197½		2.5	9.0
2	0½	Thruvision Group♦	1⅞	+¼	...	-1.9
74	46	Tribal♦	62		2.1	14.8
79	58	Vianet♦	66	+½	3.6	46.2
490	294½	ZIGUP‡	439	-2½	6.2	13.0

Retailing

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
117⅜	82½	AO World	92½	-2¼	...	14.5
269¼	140	B&M European	236⅜	-1¼	4.1	14.5
115¾	58¼	Card Factory	75¼	-⅞	6.6	8.4
1648	1062	CVS Group	1297	-25	0.7	17.6
204	113	DFS Furniture	156½	-8½	0.6	14.9
1246	707	Dunelm	857½	-12½	8.2	11.1
845	598	Frasers Group	820	-12½	...	9.5
2046	1407¼	Greggs	1845	-9	3.7	15.4
276⅛	123¾	Halfords‡	268	-5½	3.4	17.6
981	713	**Howden Joinery**	785½	-8½	2.8	16.0
895	640½	Inchcape‡	843½	-6	4.0	11.6
1⅜	0⅜	Imaging Biometrics	0¾		...	-4.7
106⅛	64	**JD Sports**	84	-2¾	1.4	9.7
372¼	240¼	**Kingfisher**	309¼	-6¼	4.0	22.1
418⅜	301⅛	**Marks & Spencer**	391¾	-3	1.1	30.9
3⅞	0⅝	Mothercare♦	0¾	-⅛	...	-0.8
93	61¾	Naked Wines♦	68½	+1⅛	...	-7.4
15900	11200	**Next**	15385	-190	1.7	20.2
341¼	140¼	Ocado	228⅜	-11⅜	...	4.8
240¾	167¼	Pets at Home	212⅝	-6	3.5	15.4
575	200	Pinewood Tech Group	450½	-1½	...	93.9
747	192¾	Saga	646	-33	...	...
380¼	292¼	**Sainsbury's**	336⅝	+3	4.1	19.5
712	378⅝	WH Smith	404¾	-8	...	-3.6
14	4½	Sosandar♦	13¼		...	94.6
510⅜	411¾	**Tesco**	471½	+14¼	3.1	17.1
50	30¼	Topps Tiles	34¾	-1¼	8.9	11.4

Technology

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
252	140⅜	Alfa Financial	166⅜	-1¼	5.8	16.3
307	195	Aptitude Software	215		2.5	29.5
129	55	Bango♦	64½		...	-8.9
20	11⅝	BATM Adv Coms	11¾	-⅛	...	-3.8
33	19⅞	Berkeley Res	26		...	-25.2
3¼	0⅞	Blackbird♦	1⅛		...	-1.8
194	74	Celebrus Tech♦	92½	-2½	3.7	-103.5
28	12⅛	Cirata♦	13	+⅜	...	-2.9
0⅜	0⅛	CloudCoCo♦	0⅛		...	0.4
5685	2234	**Computacenter**	5505	-165	1.4	37.6
286	173½	Concurrent Tech♦	252½	-7½	0.5	43.1
13½	6½	Corero♦	7¼		...	-98.2
2644	988	Craneware♦	1326	-68	2.5	31.9
110	50	Crimson Tide♦	90		...	21.4
10	5¾	CyanConnode Hldgs♦	10		...	-8.5
15½	8	Dillistone Group♦	12¼	+¾	...	-8.4
0½	0	Forgent♦	0		...	-0.0
165¾	94½	FDM Group	111⅜		6.3	21.4
480	114	Filtronic♦	217½	-18	...	...
265	151⅜	GB Group	160¼	-2	2.7	-5.2
51	24	Ilika♦	26	-1	...	-6.5
138	56	Ingenta♦	65½		6.9	5.5
178	73	Intercede♦	111		...	19.5
28½	11⅛	Iomart♦	14⅜	+⅛	...	-1.8
72⅞	4⅝	IQE♦	46¾	-1½	...	-12.4
4453½	912⅝	LG Electronics‡	1846⅝	+34⅜	1.4	...
79	37	MTI Wireless♦	68	+½	3.0	15.7
13½	2	Nanoco Group	2⅝		...	-2.3
138	94⅛	Netcall♦	115½		0.8	47.1
36	22	Northamber♦	25		2.4	-1.7
60⅜	37½	Oxford Metrics♦	39¾	+¾	8.2	-72.2
31	17	Pennant Intl♦	29½	+½	...	-5.9
447	210	Playtech	399⅜	-7	...	1.0
50	23	Pulsar Group♦	24		...	-3.1
576½	398½	QinetiQ	493¼	-14¼	2.2	24.5
117	88	RM	103		...	39.6
6½	2⅜	Seeing Machines♦	4⅝	-⅛	...	-11.2
66	35½	Shearwater Group♦	58½		...	-1.5
2134	1083	Softcat	2062	-22	1.5	31.0
39½	5	Sorted Group#	9		...	-0.2
1018½	575½	Tele Ericsson	741⅞	+3	3.1	11.3
1181	771⅝	**The Sage Grp**	1071	-21	2.1	28.4
89½	52½	Touchstar♦	85		3.8	-6.4
435	280	Tracsis♦	355	+15	0.8	...
430	236	Triad Group	410		2.2	41.3
360	210	Water Intel♦	345		...	16.3
150	96⅜	Xaar	116½	-1½	...	-27.1
19	8½	Zoo Digital♦	16½	-1⅛	...	-5.9

Telecoms

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
436¼	212½	**Airtel Africa**	342¼	+9⅜	1.5	24.9
242⅛	173	**BT Group**‡	205¼	-⅛	4.1	18.7
169½	106	Currys‡	151¾	-⅛	2.0	9.8
1207	687	Gamma Comms	1156	+16	1.9	16.6
247⅝	127⅝	Helios Towers‡	197¾	-4⅝	0.9	72.4
0⅜	0⅛	Gana Media♦	0⅛		...	-3.1
1914	638	Telecom Plus	852	-23	5.9	8.4
131⅛	83⅜	**Vodafone**	119⅜	+1	3.3	-84.5

Transport

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
260	203⅛	Braemar‡	222½	-1	3.1	30.7
5485	3365	Clarkson‡	5085	+20	2.2	23.8
683¾	332⅝	EasyJet	669¼	-4¾	2.0	10.2
225¾	152⅛	FirstGroup	176⅝	-2⅜	4.1	8.3
554	325	Fisher (James)	438	-4	...	-50.3
492⅞	332¾	**Intl Cons Air**	422⅜	-15¾	1.6	6.9
699⅝	458	Irish Cont	625	-10	...	15.7
33½	17	Mobico Group	23	-¾	...	-1.0
7	1½	Sutton Harbour♦	2	-1½	...	-0.2
1453	832	Wizz Air	1061	-40	...	...

Utilities

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
220¼	151½	**Centrica**‡	152⅞	-3	3.7	-101.6
937½	626	Drax Group	800	+25	3.8	38.6
485	420	Jersey Electricity	440	+5	5.0	12.3
1428½	1000	**National Grid**	1164	-6	4.2	17.8
606	439⅜	Pennon‡	473	-6	6.2	24.4
3335	2381	**Severn Trent**	3062	-84	4.1	24.8
2767½	1597	**SSE**‡	2406	-43	2.9	22.8
1497	1072	**United Utilities**	1402	-29	3.8	16.3

INVESTMENT COMPANIES

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
4497	1825	**3i Group**	2802	-26	3.0	5.2
399½	325	3i Infrastructure	387½	-8	3.5	12.1
1786	1408⅛	Aberforth Smlr	1750	-30	2.7	27.3
1394	1178	**Alliance Witan**‡	1360	-19	2.2	73.5
405	321	Artemis UK Future Lead	394½	-6	3.9	31.9
200	116⅜	Athelney Trust	165		6.1	14.5
273	235⅛	AVI Global	264	-1½	1.7	52.1
194	154½	AVI Japan	171½	-1	1.3	58.3
331	277	Baillie Gifford Ch Gr	306		0.8	...
133	91⅜	Baillie Gifford Eur Gr	123½	-4	0.6	...
1090	811⅛	Baillie Gifford Jpn	1056	-22	0.9	...
176	123	Baillie Gifford SN	169⅝	-4⅝	0.4	...
231	180⅛	Baillie Gifford UK Gr‡	222	-5	2.8	35.6
154¾	121¾	Bankers Invstmt Tst	149¾	-1¾	1.9	66.6
445	387¾	BH Macro GBP	423½	-½	...	20.0
1786	882	Biotech Growth	1700	-38	...	-894.7
289½	201	BlckRck Amer Inc‡	278	-1	5.4	98.2
205	123	BlckRck Eng&Res Inc	186		3.1	53.1
208	164½	BlckRck Fro Inv	190	-4	4.0	25.3
625	507	BlackRock Grt Euro	595	-15	1.2	86.4
240	200	BlckRck Inc&Grth	234		3.3	32.4
288⅜	230¾	BlckRck Smlr‡	269½	-7	2.9	30.8
1076	562	BlckRck Wld Min	1014	-46	2.4	42.1
1665	1280	Brown Adv US Sm	1572½	-12½	...	-262.5
1588	1336	Brunner‡	1550	-30	1.7	55.6
402	312	Caledonia Inv	394	-3	2.0	51.2
599	486	City of Lon IT	588	-3	3.8	27.3
155⅜	80	Crystal Amber Fd	82½		-59.8	...
592	439⅞	CT Priv Eq Ord	480	-10	5.9	...
373	320	CT UK Cap & Inc	358½	+½	3.8	29.6
120	92	CT UK HIT B	109		5.5	22.5
126	97	CT UK HIT	119	-3	5.0	24.5
480¼	460	Dunedin Ent#	475		...	...
867	737⅝	Edinburgh IT	854	-6	3.7	32.1
294½	188¼	Edin Wwide	260	-6½	...	-234.2
1332	325¾	**F&C Inv Trust**	340⅝	-4⅝	1.2	75.8
672	546	Fidlty Asian Val	624	-2	3.3	27.7
339	241	Fidelity China Sp	258	-6	3.5	28.0
1574	845	FdityEmrgMkt	1490	-18	1.3	65.1
447½	367½	Fidelity European Trust	429½	-9½	2.3	38.0
479½	372	Fidlty Spec Val	469½	-4	2.2	38.2
894	706¼	Fins Gwth & Inc	822	-14	2.5	43.5
85⅝	69¾	GCP Infrastructure‡	83⅛	-½	8.4	38.7
370	316	Global Opps Tst	343½	-4½	3.0	44.0
114⅛	108	Golden Prospect	109		-16.3	...
68⅞	57⅛	Greencoat Renew‡	67⅞	+⅛	-16.9	...
117	92¼	Greencoat UK Wind	108⅝	-1⅝	9.9	-12.5
346	250	Hansa Investment Co	336	+2	1.3	76.4
335	244	Hansa Inv Co A	332	+2	1.3	75.5
3500	2745	Hbrvest Glbl Pt Eq	3380		...	-57.2
214	173¼	Hend High Inc	206½	-½	5.4	18.3
998	769	Hend Smlr	969	-20	3.0	37.1
3290¾	2285	Herald Inv Trust	2915	-80	...	...
512	318⅝	HgCapital Trust	423	-17½	1.2	...
141	107¼	HICL Infra‡	134¾	-2⅝	6.3	9.8
1611⅜	1288¼	ICG Ent Tr	1472	-22	2.9	-414.6
494¾	379	Impax Env Mkts	440	-10½	1.2	89.1
519	369	Invesco Asia Dragon Tr	500	-3	3.8	50.9
178½	150⅛	Invesco Bond Inc	171½		7.1	13.1
427	318	Invesco Glbl Eq Inc	408	-7	3.9	81.4
1258	1041	JPM American‡	1204	-14	1.0	...
652	398	JPM Asia Gro & Inc	582	-10	5.3	...
313	260	JPM China‡	270	-5	5.0	69.4
986	791¾	JPM Claverhs‡	966	-12	3.8	28.7
310	181⅝	JPM Emrg EMEA Sec	239½		0.3	...
181¼	118⅜	JPM Em Mkts	167¼	-¾	4.5	72.7
666	548	JPMorgan Euro	631	-12	2.5	34.7
221	148	JPM Em Mkts Div Inc	210	-1	2.9	36.9
641	529⅝	JPM GG&I‡	610	-10	4.1	73.8
1098	799	JPM India‡	879	-1	5.0	...
867	661	JPM Japan	810	-8	1.1	79.8
463	365	JPM Smllr Co	428	-7	0.7	...
1290	977⅜	Law Debenture	1244	-10	3.0	33.4
191½	145½	Lowland Inv	185½	-1	3.7	27.6
138	137¾	Marwyn Val Inv	138½		15.3	...
290½	234¼	Mercantile IT	283½	-5½	2.9	30.6
691	536	Merchants Trust	681	-3	4.4	22.3
804	682	Mid Wynd	792	-8	1.1	...
1664	1366	Monks Inv Trust‡	1604	-32	0.1	...
189	142	Montanaro Eur Sml	177	-4	0.9	91.2
1036	854⅝	Murray Income Trust‡	994	-8	4.1	25.8
376	293	Murray Intl	370½	-2	3.5	26.7
437	345	Pacific Assets Trust‡	423	-2	...	75.5
409	325	Pantheon Intl	391½	-2½	...	...
5095	3636	**Pershing Sqr**‡	3832	-98	1.4	3.7
558	515	Personal Assets‡	549	-7	1.0	91.0
743½	385⅞	**Polar CapTech**	636	-20	...	-757.1
80½	63¼	Renewables Infra‡	74¾	-2⅜	10.1	-13.8
2645	1932	RIT Cap Ptnr	2500	-65	1.8	...
990⅝	490	Riverstone	590	-1	...	-368.1
738	498	Schroder TotRt	699	-13	1.6	71.3
892	608	Schrd Asia Pac	838	-4	1.6	63.4
380	311⅞	Schrod Inc Gwth	372	-4	4.0	29.6
401	276	Schrod Jap Gwth	385	-2	3.1	55.7
790	652	Schrod UKMid	768	-14	2.9	30.7
17¾	12¾	Schroder UK PP Tr	17¼	-⅛	...	-72.1
572	480⅛	Scot American‡	556	-9	2.9	35.5
1563	1015¾	**Scot Mortgage**	1465½	-27	0.3	...
88	75½	Sequoia Eco	84	-1⅝	8.2	12.3
253	215⅞	STS Glbl Inc Grwth	229		3.7	35.3
352	198⅝	Temp Emg Mkt	324	+1½	1.6	60.1
429½	334	Temple Bar‡	418½	-2	3.7	30.3
198⅝	162¾	The Glbl Smaller‡	191⅜	-2	1.6	64.9
9	0⅜	Potentially AI	6¼	+¼	-1.6	...
364½	291	TR Property	299	-6	5.4	18.9
200⅜	200⅜	UIL	197		19.4	...
302	243	Utilico Emerging Mkt	276	-3	3.5	20.3
865	682	Vietnam Ent Inv	732	-8	...	4.8
401½	320	Ww Health	386	-3½	0.6	...

♦AIM company; # Price at suspension; † Ex dividend; ‡ Ex scrip; ▲ Ex rights issue; ▼ Ex all; § Ex capital distribution; * figures or report awaited; . . . No significant data. Companies in bold are constituents of the FTSE 100 Index. Investment Cos sector Nav Dis or Prm supplied by ICE Data Services.

Exchange rates

Australia $	1.89 (-0.00053)
Canada $	1.88062 (+0.00358)
Denmark Kr	8.72209 (+0.00707)
Euro	1.1666 (+0.0005)
Hong Kong $	10.605 (-0.017)
Hungary	428.28 (+2.16)
Indonesia	23958.6 (-69.54)
Israel	4.0922 (+0.0422)
Japan Yen	216.511 (+0.121)
New Zealand $	2.29236 (+0.00243)
Norway Kr	12.604 (-0.04804)
Poland	5.05388 (+0.01438)
Russia	117.433 (+0.479)
S Africa	21.7961 (-0.00993)
Sweden Kr	12.98396 (+0.00846)
Switzerland Fr	1.0985 (+0.00377)
Turkey Lira	65.3013 (-0.0964)
USA $	1.3527 (-0.0025)

Gold/precious metals

(US dollars per ounce)

Bullion: Open $4447.928

Close $4365.783 **High** $4461.45

Low $4326.38

AM $4367.25 **PM** $4353.15

Platinum $1773.34

Silver $65.1487

Palladium $1324.871

Money rates %

Base Rates Clearing Banks: 3.75%
ECB Refi 2.40%
Fed Fund 3.5-3.75%
Halifax Mortgage Rate (SVR) 7.24%

Sterling spot and forward rates

Mkt Rates for	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Copenhagen	8.7219	8.7148	-136.798	-391.558
Euro	1.1666	1.1660	-14.22	-40.11
Montreal	1.8806	1.8770	-26.68	-78.03
New York	1.3527	1.3550	0.44	1.325
Oslo	12.6040	12.6504	53.98	165.2
Tokyo	216.4870	216.3870	-54.17	-151.39
Zurich	1.0984	1.0949	-39.2	-111.9

Other sterling

Argentine peso	2046.23535-2046.23743
Australian dollar	1.89002-1.89018
Bahrain dinar	0.50910-0.51110
Brazilian real	6.95790-6.95990
Euro	1.16660-1.16740
Hong Kong dollar	10.60500-10.60900
Indian rupee	128.32710-128.40710
Indonesian rupiah	23958.59961-23998.59961
Kuwaiti dinar	0.41710-0.41910
Malaysian ringgit	5.46160-5.46360
New Zealand dollar	2.29229-2.29260
Singaporean dollar	1.72121-1.72204
South African rand	21.79134-21.80519
UAE dirham	4.96750-4.96950

Dollar rates

Australia	1.39680-1.39760
Canada	1.39034-1.39038
Denmark	6.44813-6.44892
Euro	0.86250-0.86290
Hong Kong	7.84020-7.84120
Japan	160.05800-160.06000
Malaysia	4.03600-4.04300
Norway	9.31780-9.32030
Singapore	1.27277-1.27285
Sweden	9.59815-9.60032
Switzerland	0.81207-0.81211

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Second wife of Henry Kissinger and expert on global affairs
Nancy Kissinger
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Register

Obituaries

Édouard Balladur

Popular Gaullist prime minister of France who lost out to his former friend Jacques Chirac in the race to succeed Mitterrand as president

ALEXIS DUCLOS/GAMMA-RAPHO VIA GETTY IMAGES

Balladur in 1987 and, below, greeting the future president Jacques Chirac when relations between the pair were cordial

There are few more compelling narratives in the transactions of political life than a friendship that turns into a feud.

As with Tony Blair and Gordon Brown in the UK, Édouard Balladur and Jacques Chirac were friends and allies on the Gaullist right who had helped each other on the journey to being able to challenge for the presidency. When a coalition of conservative parties won an overwhelming victory in parliamentary elections in 1993, the Socialist president François Mitterrand's powers were on the wane. Chirac, as leader of the Gaullist Rally for the Republic (RDR) chose to devote himself to a campaign for the presidency in 1995. So he backed Mitterrand's choice of Balladur as prime minister, confident that his loyal friend would never become a challenging rival.

However, Balladur did so well from the start, with uniquely high popularity ratings of 60 to 75 per cent, that he went back on his word. "Treason is too weak a word for what Chirac feels," a friend of the pair told The Times in 1994. "They will fight to the end, tearing each other to pieces."

While the Blair-Brown feud played out in British politics for a decade, the Balladur-Chirac rivalry was settled quickly. A man with a famously limp handshake described as a "scion of the high bourgeoisie", Balludur was never cut out to be the more populist figure required for the presidency; he was described in a Times profile as "compensating for an unimposing physique with manners and language that hail straight from the ancien regime". Chirac's more robust, hard-driving, back-slapping approach prevailed.

Balladur came third in the first round of voting, behind Chirac and Lionel Jospin, after polling just 18 per cent of the vote. Chirac won, Alain Juppé — the foreign minister and party secretary who supported Chirac — was appointed prime minister and Balladur was effectively finished.

In the previous two years in "cohabitation" with Mitterrand, Balladur had become one of the most successful and popular of the postwar French prime ministers — to general surprise, for hitherto this neo-Gaullist leader had been seen as a dull technocrat, pompous and disdainful: "*Sa suffisance*" (His Smugness) he had been dubbed by the satirical press.

His real qualities emerged after the Socialists' electoral rout of March 1993, when at the age of 64 he was chosen as premier on his earlier record as a shrewd finance minister. The Socialists' corruption and bickering had left the French eager to make a new start — and Balladur caught their mood. He appeared as upright, truthful and capable: so his snobbish airs were forgiven, and his very aloofness was now seen as wisdom. Though a poor public speaker, he managed to spread an aura of serene prudence and reassurance.

He got on well with Mitterrand, and this added to his popularity. Indeed, Balladur's cohabitation with Mitterrand was easier than it had been for Chirac when he was prime minister in 1986-88. The right's majority in parliament was now far larger, and Mitterrand was aged and weaker. So Balladur was in full control, and seen to be: for the first time in the Fifth Republic, the crucial decisions were being made at Matignon (the prime minister's office), not the Élysée. However, Balladur was careful not to provoke or humiliate the president. He deferred to him on his traditional preserves of defence and foreign affairs: thus he resisted demands from elements in his ruling coalition to resume nuclear tests, which Mitterrand abhorred, or to move too close to Nato. In 1994 he won UN backing to send 2,500 troops to Rwanda to create a safe haven for civilians, but was criticised for perpetuating France's historical favouring

He favoured Savile Row suits and red cardinal socks from Rome

of the Hutu regime that was committing genocide against the Tutsis.

On the economic front, Balladur had inherited a dismal situation, with world recession biting and three million (10.5 per cent) out of work. His prudent management did little to ease unemployment, that French structural ill: but through higher taxes, spending cuts and other measures, he prepared the economy for recovery when recession ended. He was criticised for continuing the Socialists' policy of a *franc fort* (strong franc), tied to the Bundesbank with its high interest rates. This hampered employment; and it exhausted foreign reserves, causing France in August 1993 to reject the European Monetary System (EMS), which virtually collapsed, amid furore. But Balladur was at his most unflappable. "*Tout va bien*!", he claimed, as he blamed the Germans for the debacle, admitted that the old system of narrow parities had flaws, and proposed much wider ones. Later he was almost vindicated, as the franc moved back close to its old rate against D-mark, and stayed there.

Above all he was a pragmatist; when Air France workers went on strike against an austerity plan for this ailing state firm, he yielded to their demands. Much the same went for his treatment of riots by Breton fishermen, and of left-wing teachers' unrest against a bill for financing private schools.

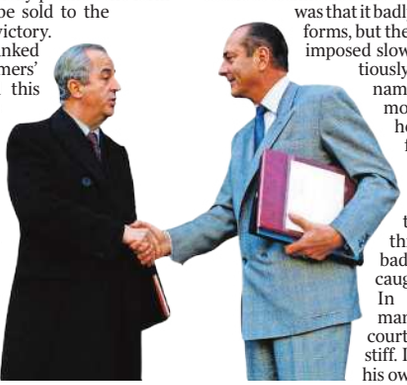
His greatest triumph was over the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (Gatt) trade talks of late 1993: with clever sleight of hand, he was able to achieve a compromise with Washington that partially pacified the farmers and could be sold to the public as a victory. Thus he outflanked Chirac, the farmers' champion, and this triumph is thought to have persuaded Balladur to run for the presidency.

Balladur knew the crucial value of the Franco-German alliance, and rebuilt bridges with Bonn after the EMS fiasco. He prepared for monetary union by giving semi-independence to the Banque de France, although he was never a Euro idealist.

From his coalition he had cleverly chosen a balanced cabinet, with Charles Pasqua (RPR) as its iron fist, matching Simone Veil from the centrist UDF as its liberal conscience. He spoke of merging these big rival parties into a single centre-right movement.

He was always impeccably dressed, with suits made in Savile Row and red cardinal socks from Rome. He relished the finest food and wines, in select company ("While you dally with your duchesses, I'm off to see my peasants," Chirac teased him).

By early 1995 he looked unstoppable, but ultimately Balladur failed to belie the stereotype of the competent but cautious technocrat. His view of France was that it badly needed reforms, but these had to be imposed slowly and cautiously. Nicknamed Ballamou (soft Ed), he had a gift for sailing serene — above the fray, so that when things went badly, others caught the flak. In public, his manner was courteous but stiff. In private, in his own milieu, he was a man of quiet ironical wit and some charm. His sang-froid was famous: once, on a bumpy flight, when other passengers were in panic, Balladur sat totally calm, and explained, "You see, I have no imagination."



Youngest of six children, Édouard Balladur was born in Izmir, Turkey, in 1929 where his expatriate father, Pierre, was a director of the Ottoman Bank. The family were strict old-style Catholics; Édouard addressed his parents in the more formal vous.

In 1937 the family returned to their native Marseille, where Édouard attended the lycée, then studied law at Aix-en-Provence. In Paris, he pursued the classic elite cycle of Institut d'Etudes Politiques and Ecole Nationale d'Administration, then joining the Conseil d'Etat, a supreme legal body. He made influential friends and in 1964-66 was appointed to the staff of the prime minister Georges Pompidou. For 12 years he was head of the public company building the Mont Blanc Tunnel. At the same time, in 1969-74, he ran President Pompidou's private staff.

In 1986 he won a safe Paris seat for the National Assembly. He was good friends with Chirac, who now became prime minister and gave him the finance ministry. Here he was the architect of the privatisation programme that included big banks and the main state television network. An advocate of shrinking the state in line with Reagan in the US and Margaret Thatcher in Britain, he also removed credit restrictions and price controls, and cut the budget deficit. But this critic of the state was stately: when the rest of his ministry moved out from the Louvre to modern premises, Balladur insisted on staying put in his own gilded office, expensively restored.

Balladur was devoted to his wife Josée, a spontaneous woman full of laughter, and to their four sons Pierre, Jérôme, Henri and Romain. He never brought paperwork home at night to his elegant apartment. Josée died last December.

He was unable to resurrect his career after losing to Chirac in 1995. When Chirac created the Union for Popular Movement in 2002, Balladur watched on wryly; Chirac had once called Balladur's call for a unification of right-wing parties a betrayal of de Gaulle's ideals and a "illusory utopia".

Balladur remained active in the National Assembly and presided over its foreign affairs committee before his retirement in 2007.

In 2017, when he was charged with "complicity in the misuse of funds" while prime minister, accused of accepting kickbacks on the sale of three submarines to Pakistan and using the money to fund his presidential campaign in 1995. Several former officials were found guilty, but Balladur was acquitted in March 2021.

His secret, a little like de Gaulle's, was to understand and manage the French so well. He knew more shrewdly than others how to govern the troubled, difficult French — but he overplayed his hand.

Édouard Balladur, French prime minister, was born on May 2, 1929. He died on August 31, 2026, aged 97

Register

Nancy Kissinger

Striking second wife of Henry Kissinger dubbed his 'ambassadress at large' who was an expert on international affairs

PL GOULD/GETTY IMAGES

The Kissingers were largely inseparable, although many diplomats were amused to see Nancy towering over Henry

By 1974 Henry Kissinger was President Nixon's secretary of state, having previously served for six years as his national security adviser. He had also developed a reputation as a playboy and party-goer who loved the company of glamorous women, having dated the likes of Liv Ullmann, Shirley MacLaine and the Bond girl Jill St John since divorcing his first wife a decade earlier. But on March 30 that year he discreetly married Nancy Maginnes, a woman 11 years his junior, and several inches taller. Few outside Kissinger's inner circle had heard of her.

They had met while working for Nelson Rockefeller, the governor of New York State, the year of Kissinger's divorce, and had grown steadily closer over subsequent years. But while other women flaunted their relationships with Kissinger, Nancy had studiously avoided press photographers and gossip columnists — at least until they married.

The secret civil ceremony took place in Arlington, Virginia, hours after Kissinger had held talks with Moshe Dayan, Israel's defence minister. It was attended by a handful of family and friends. The couple then took a ten-day honeymoon in Acapulco, Mexico, accompanied by Kissinger's secret service detail and trailed by journalists. Thereafter his bride was seldom not seen at his side.

Within two months she was accompanying him on the shuttle diplomacy in the Middle East that ended the Arab-Israeli war of 1973. Soon after that she flew with him to Moscow for strategic nuclear arms control talks with President Brezhnev. A contemporary newsreel showed China's diminutive Mao Zedong reacting with astonishment to her height when they met in Beijing.

In many ways the Kissingers made an improbable couple. He had arrived in the US in 1938 as a 15-year-old Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany, while she was the Waspy daughter of a wealthy Episcopalian lawyer from New York. He was 5ft 8in, bespectacled and dumpy, while she was a striking, slim, ash-blonde standing nearly 6ft tall.

Yet in other ways they were perfectly matched. Nancy was cerebral, socially adept and an expert on international affairs. Behind the scenes, she was a "powerhouse of ideas and insights" and "Henry's most valued and trusted adviser", said Michael Bloomberg, the former New York mayor who was a close friend of the couple. "She served as my conscience," Kissinger wrote in his memoirs. "She doesn't take any guff from him," a fellow Nixon administration official noted.

She was also fiercely protective of the name and physical security of her husband. On one occasion in 1982 the couple were walking through Newark airport to catch a flight to Boston, where he was to undergo a triple-bypass heart operation, when an activist started hurling insults at him and asked if he had slept with young boys.

Mrs Kissinger grabbed the woman by the throat as if to throttle her, and told her in no uncertain terms to desist. The woman sued her for assault, but lost. The judge ruled that Mrs Kissinger had caused the woman no bodily injury, and that her conduct was a "somewhat human reaction to an offensive question".

Nancy Sharon Kissinger (née Maginnes) was born in Manhattan in 1934, the daughter and third child of a lawyer, Albert, who had once been a professional American football player and his wife Agnes (née McKinley). She grew up in White Plains, an affluent New York suburb, was educated at a nearby private girls' school, then earned a history degree from the elite all-women Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts.

She taught history for two years before embarking on a master's in history at the University of California in Berkeley. She met Kissinger in the summer of 1964 when he was a Harvard professor working as a foreign policy adviser to Nelson Rockefeller, who was running for president, and she was a researcher.

Kissinger was at that time divorcing his first wife, Ann Fleischer, another Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany with whom he had had a daughter, Elizabeth, and a son, David. He persuaded her to return to the eastern US, briefly taught her at Harvard, and after he became Nixon's national security adviser in 1969 she joined the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, a philanthropic foundation that promotes world peace.

Later, after a sabbatical at the Sorbonne in Paris, she became director of international studies for Rockefeller's Commission on Critical Choices for Americans, a private study group set up to study the domestic and foreign challenges facing the US. By 1974 she was eminently well qualified to partner the US secretary of state though she was 39 and he 50. Nixon quipped: "She's a little liberal but otherwise she's all right."

For nearly three years she accompanied Kissinger on his diplomatic travels, appearing beside him at press conferences, briefings on his plane and photo opportunities with world leaders, and always a model of decorum and discretion. She was dubbed Kissinger's "intellectual soulmate" and "ambassadress-at-large".

Kissinger stayed on as secretary of state after Nixon's resignation over Watergate, but left office in January 1977 after Nixon's successor, Gerald Ford, lost the White House to Jimmy Carter. Thereafter the Kissingers made an apartment on New York's Upper East Side their primary residence. They were embraced by the city's social elite, appearing regularly at fashionable galas, openings and charity fundraisers as well as state dinners, White House receptions and diplomatic functions in Washington.

Enriched by the proceeds of the international consultancy, Kissinger Associates, which he founded in 1982, they bought a 300-acre property at South Kent in the hills of rural western Connecticut. She was also an active philanthropist, raising large amounts for good causes.

The couple never had children, but for nearly half a century they were inseparable. Having arranged his 50th birthday party at New York's Colony Club in 1973, she also arranged his 90th birthday party at the St Regis hotel in New York in 2013 and oversaw his 100th birthday celebrations in 2023. They included a trip to his birthplace in Furth, Bavaria, six months before he died.

Nancy Kissinger, philanthropist and socialite, was born on April 13, 1934. She died on August 20, 2026, aged 92

Terry Dyson

Diminutive terrier-like winger who was a key figure in Tottenham Hotspur's celebrated double-winning side of 1960-61

Terry Dyson's bullet header past Gordon Banks sealed victory for Tottenham Hotspur against Leicester City in the FA Cup final in 1961 but earned the winger a dressing-down from his manager Bill Nicholson.

The 2-0 win meant that Tottenham became the first team in the 20th century to achieve a league and cup double, and joy was unbounded as the players headed back to the dressing room at Wembley. "We were over the moon, but I missed a sitter when I nodded over the bar from six yards when it was nil-nil and as I'm coming off the first words he [Nicholson] said to me were: 'What about the goal you missed?'" Eventually Dyson got a grudging "Yes all right, well done then" from his manager, a fellow Yorkshireman.

Dyson had originally wanted to be a jockey like his father — and was the right height at 5ft 3in — but he was not light enough. Instead, his powerful stocky frame and low centre of gravity enabled him to become the archetypal terrier on the left wing who was hard to knock off the ball and he had a powerful left foot shot that contributed 17 goals during the double-winning season.

Dyson with Danny Blanchflower, left, Bobby Smith, right, and the FA Cup

Dyson was also a man for the big occasion, who would go on to become the first Spurs player (and still the only one) to score a hat-trick in a north London derby as Spurs beat their bitter rivals Arsenal 4-3 in August 1961. The following season Dyson would play a starring role, scoring twice in Tottenham's 5-1 win against Atlético Madrid to win the 1963 European Cup Winners' Cup.

Terence Kent Dyson was born in Malton, north Yorkshire, in 1934 to John "Ginger" Dyson and his wife Jessie, who ran a pub together in the town. Terry left Malton Grammar School at 17 and began working for an estate agent. He did not think of progressing any further than playing for non-league Scarborough, but that changed during National Service in the Royal Artillery when he turned out for an Army XI at Woolwich against the Grenadier Guards and scored five goals.

Dyson signed for Tottenham and made his debut against Sheffield United in March 1955. His rapid trajectory was followed by a long period in Tottenham's reserves as he struggled to dislodge George Robb and Terry Medwin. When Cliff Jones joined the club in 1958, Dyson contemplated asking for transfer, and several clubs made inquiries, but Nicholson decided to keep him.

Dyson repaid Nicholson's faith by winning a regular place in the side in the 1959-60 season, operating on the left wing with Jones on the right. "Bill was a perfectionist really and wanted us to play with style," recalled the chirpy winger. "He was brought up playing 'push and run' under Arthur Rowe and wanted us to win playing the Tottenham way... a player moves, takes an opponent with him and thus creates a space."

With his tireless running Dyson exemplified the tactic at the start of the 1960-61 season as Tottenham won 11 games in a row, a record that still stands for the top flight. Dyson missed just two games as the club won the double with a free-scoring team featuring the canny artistry of Danny Blanchflower allied to the steel of Dave Mackay in midfield, the powerful Bobby Smith up front and the skilful inside forward John White, who would be killed by a bolt of lightning while playing golf at the age of 27.

Dyson lost his place to Medwin during the 1961-62 season and Tottenham finished a disappointing third. By then the maximum wage of £20 a week had been abolished and Dyson was now earning double. Yet he continued to live in digs with the same family and quaffed pints with Spurs fans after matches in a pub near the club's White Hart Lane ground. In 1965 he moved to Fulham for £5,000 after 209 appearances and 55 goals for Tottenham.

His final league club was Colchester United and after leaving them in 1970 he played in the Guildford team that won the Southern League Division One in 1971.

Dyson had married Kay in 1966. The couple had three sons: Neil, Barry and Mark. Dyson ran a sports shop in Kingsbury, north London, and in later years worked as a PE teacher.

In the early 1990s, Dyson sold his Tottenham medals, but the memories remained. "Danny Blanchflower said after we won the double that people didn't realise what we'd done then, but in years to come they would. He was right because people look back now and say, 'Cor, that was a good side'."

Terry Dyson, footballer, was born on November 29, 1934. He died on August 20, 2026, aged 91

Law Report

Animal rights protest on private road did not constitute a public nuisance

Supreme Court
Published September 2, 2026
Rex v McCafferty and others
Before Lord Reed, Lord Sales, Lord Leggatt, Lady Simler and Lord Doherty
[2026] UKSC 20
Judgment July 14, 2026

The public at large did not enjoy a right to pass to and from private business premises over a road that was a private way. Obstructing passage on that private way did not amount to an offence of public nuisance within section 78(1)(b)(ii) of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.

The Supreme Court so held in allowing an appeal by the six defendants, James McCafferty, Alberto Garcia, Tatum Paul, Sarah Benn, Catherine Cannon and Osian Dixon, against the decision of the Court of Appeal Criminal Division ([2025] EWCA Crim 748) that had in turn allowed the Crown's appeal against the ruling of His Honour Judge Jackson, sitting in the crown court at Worcester on April 29, 2025, that the defendants had no case to answer in respect of a charge of intentionally or recklessly causing a public nuisance contrary to section 78(1) of the act.

Benjamin Newton KC, **Laura Stockdale** and **Maria Liddiard** for the defendants; **David Perry KC**, **Victoria Ailes** and **Rachel Hughes** for the Crown.

LORD LEGGATT, with whom Lord Reed, Lady Simler and Lord Doherty agreed, said that on September 8, 2022, as part of a protest by a group called "Animal Rebellion", the defendants had either chained themselves to fencing in front of the main entrance to a dairy works, which was owned and operated by Müller UK and located within the Stonebridge Cross industrial estate near Droitwich, or sat down on the private road in front of it and stuck themselves to the road surface with glue.

They remained there for about four hours during which time no vehicles could enter or leave the dairy works site. The only road access to the diary works was over a private road called Pointon Way.

The defendants denied the charge of intentionally or recklessly causing a public nuisance contrary to section 78(1) by obstructing the public or a section of the public in the exercise or enjoyment of "a right that may be exercised or enjoyed by the public at large" within section 78(1)(b)(ii).

At trial they submitted that there was no case to answer because the public at large did not have a right to travel along Pointon Way, because it was a private road, or to enter or leave the dairy works site, because it was on private premises. Therefore there was no evidence before the jury that they had obstructed the exercise or enjoyment of such a right.

The essential question on the instant appeal was whether there was "a right that may be exercised or enjoyed by the public at large" to pass to and from private business premises over a road that was a private way and not a highway. The short answer to that question was "no".

The public at large were not authorised to pass along a private road such as Pointon Way. In general, the only people who might lawfully use such a road were the owner or other occupier of the land and anyone who had been granted a right of way along the road or permission to use it by the occupier.

It was assumed that Müller UK and other occupiers of business premises to which Pointon Way provided access had a private right of way along the road to go to and from their premises and that that right extended to their employees and other visitors but there was no evidence to suggest that any right or permission to use Pointon Way had been granted to anyone else.

Even if the use of Pointon Way by other people for other purposes was tolerated in the sense that, apart from the display of a sign that no trespassing was permitted, no active steps were taken to prevent such use, that did not mean that someone who had no business at any of the premises on Pointon Way but who chose to walk along it for some other purpose was acting lawfully. Such a person was in law a trespasser even if the trespass was tolerated. There was no basis for inferring that the owner of Pointon Way had granted permission to the general public to use the road, and the sign displayed showed that it had not.

Even if such permission had been granted, it would not constitute a right within the meaning of section 78(1)(b)(ii). There was a legal distinction, which was well understood, between a right of way or other right to use land, which was an interest in land that others owed a duty not to interfere with, and a mere licence or permission to do so, which merely made it lawful for the licensee to do what would otherwise be a trespass and, unlike a right of way, was dependent on the continuing consent of the landowner and could always be revoked.

The language of section 78(1)(b)(ii) was clear in that respect and the term "right" as used therein would not reasonably be understood to include a licence or permission.

A person given permission by the landowner to enter private land was not exercising a "right" within the meaning of section 78(1)(b)(ii) and the fact that a landowner permitted the general public to enter the land, either unconditionally or subject to conditions, was not the same as the public having a "right" to do so.

It followed that obstructing passage on a private road could only amount to an offence of public nuisance if the first limb of the offence was satisfied and the defendant's conduct "creates a risk of, or causes, serious harm to the public or a section of the public" within section 78(1)(b)(i), which had not been alleged in this case; nor had the defendants been charged, as they might have been, with an offence of aggravated trespass.

The appeal would be allowed, the judge's ruling confirmed and an order made that the defendants be acquitted of the offence.

Lord Sales gave a concurring judgment.

Solicitors: **Hodge Jones & Allen**; **CPS Appeals and Review Unit**.

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CONSEQUENTLY, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. Romans 10.17 (NIV)

Bible verses are provided by the Bible Society

Births

BOWDEN-TILL On 7th August 2026 to Sophie and Josh (Bowden-Till), a son, Cooper Lewis at the Rosie Hospital, Cambridge.

DEVEREUX on 19th August 2026 to Iona (née McLaren) and Edward, a daughter, Christabel Susan Caroline.

Forthcoming Marriages

MR G. GREENWOOD AND MISS S. PETERS
The engagement is announced between George, son of Mr Nick Greenwood and Mrs Kerry Greenwood of Devon and Stephanie, elder daughter of Mr Stephen Peters and Mrs Debbie Peters of Dublin.

Deaths

BRETT
Michael Brian on 20th August 2026, aged 76. It is with deep sorrow that we announce the death of our devoted husband, dad and grandfather, surrounded by the family he loved so dearly.
Mike leaves behind a legacy of love, faith and devotion to family and generations of young people educated in schools in Cheltenham, Northampton, Okehampton, Ashington and Durham.
Requiem Mass will be celebrated at St Paul's, Alnwick, midday, 11th September.

HINES Anthony James passed away on 28th August 2026, aged 87, and is survived by his wife Carol, children Nicola and Philip and five grandchildren. He will be missed by all his family and friends. A service to celebrate his life will be held at St Peter's Church, Cockfield, on Tuesday 15th September at 12.15pm. Family flowers only but donations to St Nicholas Hospice, if people wish, on-line via WA Deacon Funeral Services, Lavenham.

RICHARDSON Carol on 20th August 2026, aged 80, died peacefully in ICU at Charing Cross Hospital after 36 days in an induced coma following seizures at home. Dearly loved wife (of 50 years) of James, adored mother of Sam and Tom and "Granny" to Rafe, Dasha and Louis. Private cremation at Mortlake Crematorium on 14th September to be followed by a celebration of Carol's life at The Bell & Crown, Strand on the Green, 11-13 Thames Road, W4 3PL, from 1pm.

SOUTHGATE Philip James passed away on 18th August 2026, aged 78, at home after a battle with prostate cancer. Much-loved husband of Nicola, father of Dudley and Caroline, grandfather of George, Harry and Sophia. Funeral 2pm, Tuesday 15th September at All Saints Church, Rocklands, Attleborough, Norfolk, NR17 1XW.

TOMKINS Robin died peacefully on 23rd August 2026, aged 99. Loving husband of Frances, proud father of Caroline, Nicola and Rebecca and adored grandfather and great-grandfather. Thanksgiving service at Frinton Parish Church on Saturday 3rd October at 11.30am. Donations if desired to Cancer Research UK. Inquiries: rthanksgiving310@gmail.com

WEBB Catherine Sarah CB died on 19th August 2026, aged 47. Beloved daughter of David and Jane, sister to Libby and auntie to Alice and Emily. Katie died peacefully at Guy's hospital with her family by her side. Formerly of HM Treasury and more recently bursar of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. A short life, well lived. Funeral in London, Monday 7th September, details from Poppy's Funerals.

WINTER Jane Elizabeth MBE (née Graham) passed away peacefully on 19th August 2026, aged 79. Devoted wife of Colin, much-loved mother of Nicky, Jenny and Debbie and cherished grandmother. A funeral service will be held at Cam Valley Crematorium on Friday 25th September at 11.30am. No flowers. Donations to Parkinson's UK.

There is no Court Circular for September 1

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DAY 13: SHANGHAI, CHINA
Included Escorted Tour: Shanghai
Today's explorations include the Yu Gardens before following the age-old silk production process at the Silk Factory. Next, admire the colonial architecture with a stroll along the Bund. This evening, view the city from the Huangpu River on a panoramic cruise before enjoying a traditional Shanghainese meal.

DAY 14: FLY FROM SHANGHAI TO ZHANGJIAJIE, CHINA
This morning, transfer with your guide to Shanghai airport for your flight to Zhangjiajie. After arriving at your hotel, this evening, enjoy dinner in a local restaurant.

DAY 15: ZHANGJIAJIE, CHINA
Included Escorted Tour: Zhangjiajie National Park
Ride the Bailong glass lift and enjoy amazing views from Mihun Stage, including the 'First Bridge under the Sun' and Hallelujah Mountain. After lunch, continue to Emperor Mountain and visit Helong Park, Jinbian Stream and Ten-Mile Natural Gallery. End the day with a scenic sampan cruise on Lake Baofeng.

DAY 16: ZHANGJIAJIE, CHINA
Included Escorted Tour: Tianmen Mountain
Cruise the turquoise waters of Lake Baofeng before riding the world's longest cable car up breathtaking Tianmen Mountain. Marvel at Heaven's Door cave, brave the thrilling glass skywalk, and descend for a free evening to explore the town.

DAY 17: TRAVEL FROM ZHANGJIAJIE TO YICHANG PORT, CHINA
Board your dedicated coach to Yichang port and board your ship for a 4-night full-board Yangtze river cruise.

DAY 18: YANGTZE RIVER, CHINA
Included Escorted Tour: Three Gorges Dam Excursion

DAY 19: YANGTZE RIVER, CHINA
Included Escorted Tour: Lesser Gorges Excursion

DAY 20: YANGTZE RIVER, CHINA
Included Escorted Tour: Shuanggui Mountain Excursion

DAY 21: DISEMBARK YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE IN CHONGQING, CHINA
Included Escorted Tour: Liziba Station & Kuixinglou
Your ship arrives in Chongqing this morning, where you will transfer to your hotel for a 1-night stay. Spend the rest of your afternoon exploring the city at leisure.

DAY 22: TRAVEL FROM CHONGQING TO CHENGDU, CHINA
Included Escorted Tour: Sichuan Hot Pot & Changing Face Show
Travel to Chengdu today, the home of the Giant Pandas! After checking in, enjoy an authentic Sichuan Hot Pot dinner, followed by a mesmerising Changing Face Show.

DAY 23: TRAVEL FROM CHENGDU TO XI'AN, CHINA
Included Escorted Tour: Chengdu Giant Panda Research Base
After breakfast, visit China's most lovable resident, the Giant Panda, at the Chengdu Panda Research Base. Later, board a high-speed bullet train to Xi'an, where you will enjoy a dumpling feast and a Tang Dynasty dance performance.

DAY 24: XI'AN, CHINA
Included Escorted Tour: Terracotta Warriors & Tang Everbright City
Discover the famous Terracotta Warriors this morning, followed by a local ceramics workshop. This afternoon, stroll Xi'an's ancient city walls before enjoying an evening tour amid the vibrant lights of Datang Everbright City.

DAY 25: TRAVEL FROM XI'AN TO BEIJING, CHINA
After checking out of your hotel, you will transfer to Beijing. On arrival, you will then head to your hotel for a 3-night stay. Take the evening to relax or perhaps explore the local sights.

DAY 26: BEIJING, CHINA
Included Escorted Tour: Great Wall Of China
Visit the iconic Great Wall at Juyongguan to explore ancient watchtowers and breathtaking views. Afterwards, tour a local jade museum, wander the imperial Summer Palace, and return to your hotel for an evening at leisure.

DAY 27: BEIJING, CHINA
Included Escorted Tour: Tiananmen Square, Forbidden City & Temple Of Heaven
Stroll Tiananmen Square into the magnificent Forbidden City, then soak up the serene atmosphere of the Temple of Heaven. End your memorable day enjoying an authentic Peking Duck dinner, a local Beijing speciality.

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- ✓ Stand in awe of the Terracotta Warriors of Xi'an
- ✓ Enjoy a full day of exploring Zhangjiajie National Park (The Avatar Mountains)
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Around Britain

Key: b=bright, c=cloud, d=drizzle, pc=partly cloudy du=dull, f=fair, fg=fog, h=hail, m=mist, r=rain, sh=showers, sl=sleet, sn=snow, s=sun, t=thunder *=previous day **=data not available

	Temp C midday yesterday		Rain mm 24 hrs to 5pm yesterday	Sun hr* yesterday
Aberdeen	17	M	2.6	3.7
Aberporth	17	R	0.4	1.7
Anglesey	18	S	0.0	3.4
Aviemore	17	R	2.0	1.9
Barnstaple	21	PC	0.0	**
Bedford	20	PC	0.0	**
Belfast	17	C	1.8	0.8
Birmingham	21	PC	0.0	**
Bournemouth	21	C	0.0	5.9
Bridlington	21	S	0.2	**
Bristol	21	R	0.0	1.0
Camborne	18	PC	0.0	4.6
Cardiff	20	PC	1.4	5.0
Edinburgh	17	C	0.2	5.0
Eskdalemuir	14	R	1.8	4.2
Glasgow	15	D	9.0	2.2
Hereford	21	PC	0.0	**
Herstmonceux	20	C	0.0	4.7
Ipswich	21	PC	0.4	4.4
Isle of Man	17	C	0.0	1.5
Isle of Wight	22	S	0.0	**
Jersey	20	S	0.0	6.3
Keswick	17	C	0.2	**
Kinloss	**	**	**	**
Leeds	17	C	0.0	**
Lerwick	12	R	5.2	0.1
Leuchars	18	C	0.0	5.7
Lincoln	20	PC	0.0	6.1
Liverpool	21	PC	0.0	**
London	22	C	0.0	6.6
Lyneham	20	C	0.0	4.9
Manchester	19	C	0.0	2.6
Margate	19	C	0.0	6.9
Milford Haven	17	R	1.6	**
Newcastle	19	C	0.0	**
Nottingham	20	PC	0.0	5.7
Orkney	13	D	3.8	**
Oxford	20	C	0.0	**
Plymouth	21	PC	0.0	**
Portland	20	PC	0.0	**
Scilly, St Mary's	20	PC	0.0	**
Shoreham	20	**	0.0	5.2
Shrewsbury	21	PC	0.0	4.0
Snowdonia	18	C	0.0	**
Southend	21	S	1.4	6.0
South Uist	15	S	6.0	**
Stornoway	15	PC	4.2	2.7
Tiree	16	PC	4.8	3.7
Whitehaven	16	R	0.0	5.7
Wick	15	D	0.6	**
Yeovilton	22	PC	0.0	6.7

The world

All readings local midday yesterday

Alicante	30	PC	Madeira	27	PC
Amsterdam	20	PC	Madrid	29	S
Athens	33	S	Malaga	28	PC
Auckland	14	C	Mallorca	32	PC
Bahrain	39	S	Malta	31	PC
Bangkok	30	PC	Melbourne	20	PC
Barbados	30	PC	Mexico City	22	C
Barcelona	27	PC	Miami	29	**
Beijing	29	S	Milan	28	PC
Beirut	**	**	Mombasa	29	PC
Belgrade	29	S	Montreal	22	PC
Berlin	21	B	Moscow	23	PC
Bermuda	29	SH	Mumbai	31	**
Bordeaux	24	S	Munich	22	PC
Brussels	22	PC	Nairobi	22	B
Bucharest	29	S	Naples	33	PC
Budapest	27	S	New Orleans	30	PC
Buenos Aires	19	S	New York	26	PC
Cairo	33	S	Nice	28	PC
Calcutta	27	T	Nicosia	32	PC
Canberra	19	PC	Oslo	16	PC
Cape Town	18	S	Paris	23	PC
Chicago	30	**	Perth	18	B
Copenhagen	18	B	Prague	20	PC
Corfu	33	PC	Reykjavik	10	PC
Delhi	33	PC	Riga	21	B
Dubai	40	PC	Rio de Janeiro	25	B
Dublin	19	B	Riyadh	42	S
Faro	24	S	Rome	31	S
Florence	32	PC	San Francisco	18	C
Frankfurt	23	PC	Santiago	16	PC
Geneva	25	S	São Paulo	23	S
Gibraltar	23	B	Seoul	24	R
Helsinki	19	PC	Seychelles	26	B
Hong Kong	27	SH	Singapore	32	B
Honolulu	**	**	St Petersburg	21	PC
Istanbul	29	PC	Stockholm	19	PC
Jerusalem	32	PC	Sydney	25	S
Johannesburg	24	S	Tel Aviv	32	PC
Kuala Lumpur	28	T	Tenerife	32	PC
Kyiv	**	**	Tokyo	27	B
Lanzarote	29	PC	Vancouver	20	B
Las Palmas	30	PC	Venice	29	PC
Lima	21	C	Vienna	25	PC
Lisbon	25	PC	Warsaw	19	PC
Los Angeles	25	PC	Washington	30	B
Luxor	37	S	Zurich	24	PC

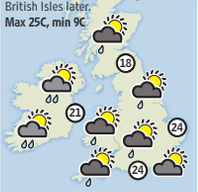
Five days ahead

A changeable week with the risk of rain for most places, although with drier periods as well

Tomorrow

Mainly cloudy with the chance of showers, although there will be some brighter intervals. An area of rain will move across northwestern parts of the British Isles later.

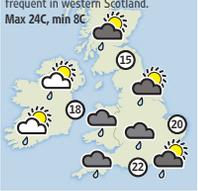
Max 25C, min 9C



Friday

Feeling humid across England and Wales, with a band of rain advancing southeastwards. Sunny spells and showers following from the northwest, frequent in western Scotland.

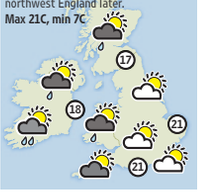
Max 24C, min 8C



Saturday

A largely dry and bright start, with just a scattering of showers in northwest Scotland. Heavy rain will spread over Ireland, Wales and northwest England later.

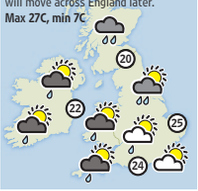
Max 21C, min 7C



Sunday

Low pressure will bring an unsettled day in the north and west, with heavy rain or showers. Generally dry in the southeast, although a band of showers will move across England later.

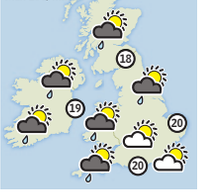
Max 27C, min 7C



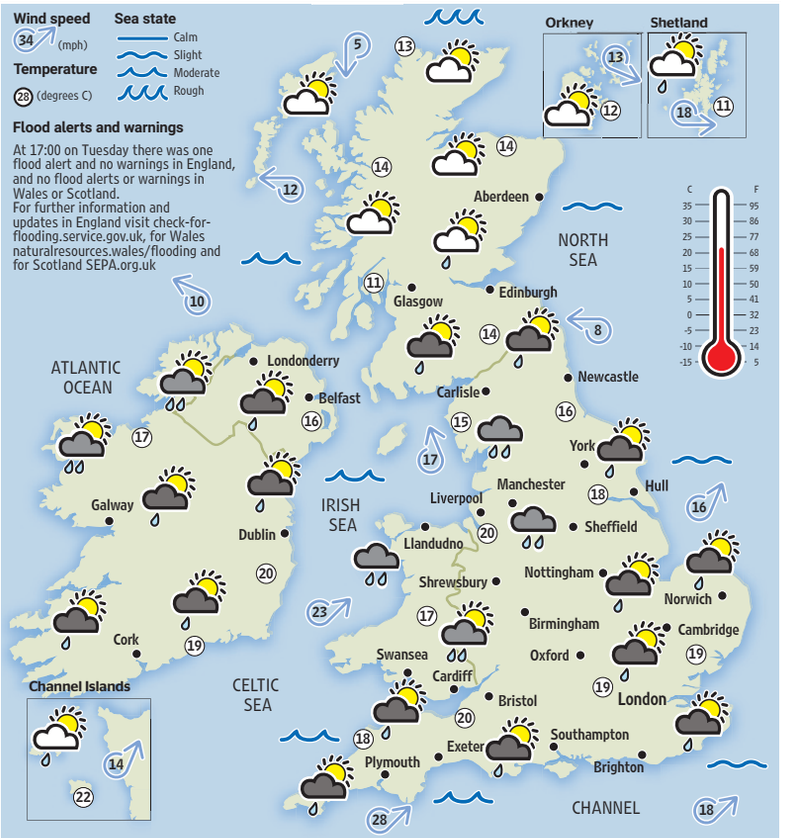
Monday

The chance of rain or showers in the north and west, but generally drier in the south and east with sunny spells.

Max 20C, min 7C



The Times weather page is provided by WeatherQuest

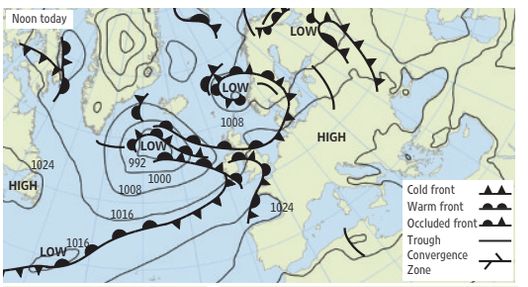


General situation: Rain or showers for many central and southern areas. Dry and bright in northern Scotland.
Borders, SW Scotland, Lake District, NE Eng: Cloudy with the risk of rain at first, becoming patchier later with some bright spells possible. Light southerly winds. Maximum 18C (64F), minimum 13C (55F).
Republic of Ireland, N Ireland: A changeable day with showery rain at times. The best of the brightness in the south. Light to moderate southwesterly winds. Maximum 22C (72F), minimum 14C (57F).
SE Eng, SW Eng, London, Channel Is, Cen S Eng: A bright start in the east, before showery rain spreads from the west. Turning brighter later with one or two showers. Moderate southwesterly winds. Maximum 21C (70F), minimum 17C (63F).
Aberdeen, Cen Highland, Moray Firth, Glasgow, NW Scotland, NE Scotland, N Isles, Edinburgh and Dundee, Argyll: A few light showers over Shetland, and in southern areas, otherwise dry with bright spells. Rain in the southwest in the evening. Light to moderate winds, variable in direction. Maximum 17C (63F), minimum 9C (48F).
NW Eng, Cen N Eng, Midlands, Wales, E Anglia, E Eng, IoM: A bright start in the east, before an area of cloud and rain spreads from the west. Rain clearing later to leave a mixture of sunny spells and showers. Moderate southwesterly winds. Maximum 21C (70F), minimum 15C (59F).

Tides

Tidal predictions. Heights in metres. All times in local time

Today		Ht		Ht
Aberdeen	05:01	4.3	17:34	3.9
Avonmouth	11:07	12.3	23:26	12.2
Belfast	02:36	3.6	15:05	3.3
Cardiff	10:48	11.6	23:08	11.4
Devonport	09:41	5.1	21:55	5.1
Dover	02:30	6.5	14:52	6.7
Dublin	--:--	--	--:--	--
Falmouth	08:52	4.9	21:08	4.9
Greenock	04:08	3.6	16:25	3.4
Harwich	03:32	3.8	15:33	4.0
Holyhead	01:55	5.6	14:17	5.2
Hull	10:10	7.4	22:32	6.9
Leith	06:22	5.5	18:55	5.2
Liverpool	02:40	9.3	15:01	8.8
London Bridge	05:39	6.6	17:53	6.9
Lowestoft	01:16	2.4	13:20	2.6
Milford Haven	10:02	6.6	22:25	6.6
Morecambe	02:51	9.4	15:12	8.8
Newhaven	02:41	6.5	15:01	6.5
Newquay	08:55	6.5	21:19	6.5
Oban	09:17	3.6	21:49	3.6
Penzance	08:27	5.2	20:48	5.2
Portsmouth	02:58	4.5	15:30	4.5
Shoreham	02:46	6.1	15:07	6.1
Southampton	02:38	4.6	04:23	4.1
Swansea	10:05	8.9	22:25	8.8
Tees	07:20	5.5	19:58	5.1
Weymouth	10:24	1.9	22:43	1.8



Synoptic situation

Low pressure south of Iceland drives a series of fronts eastwards across the British Isles, bringing cloud and rain to central and southern areas. Scotland will be drier and brighter, underneath a slight ridge of high pressure. Tonight, further fronts will track across the British Isles from the west, with a ridge building over the south tomorrow.

Highs and lows

24hrs to 5pm yesterday

Warmest: Teddington, Greater London, 24.1C
Coldest: Cairngorm, 3.2C
Wettest: Achnagart, 26.2mm
Sunniest: East Malling, Kent, 7.1hrs*

Sun and moon

For Greenwich
Sun rises: 06.14
Sun sets: 19.44
Moon rises: 21.12
Moon sets: 14.26 Thu
Third quarter: September 4

Hours of darkness

Aberdeen	20:33-05:44
Belfast	20:43-06:04
Birmingham	20:24-05:52
Cardiff	20:27-05:58
Exeter	20:27-06:01
Glasgow	20:39-05:55
Liverpool	20:29-05:55
London	20:15-05:46
Manchester	20:27-05:51
Newcastle	20:27-05:46
Norwich	20:11-05:39
Penzance	20:34-06:10
Sheffield	20:23-05:49

Weather Eye

Paul Simons

Could that have been Mickey Mouse I saw gliding across the sky — his unmistakable pair of cartoon ears poking out from his dome-shaped head?

But then no sooner had this strange sight appeared than it changed its shape and turned back into another puffy, run-of-the-mill cloud of no great significance.

This was the fascinating scene that unfolded last weekend as great clouds towered up in the sky, mountainous heaps with a host of fascinating shapes that let the imagination run riot, changing and metamorphosing into a host of familiar figures and objects.

As Samuel Taylor Coleridge put it, "to make the shifting clouds be what you please" (*Fancy in Nubibus or the Poet in the Clouds*, 1818).

These fantastic displays are pareidolia at work — seeing non-existent faces, animals, objects and patterns in everyday things, from smiley faces to outlandish maps of familiar countries and many more things besides.

This is the phenomenon that gives us the Man in the Moon, or the patterns of stars we know as the names of constellations such as Ursa Major (the great bear).

Perhaps it also explains old legends of armies or ships gliding across the sky, and in more recent occasions flying saucers arriving from outer space.

And the great painter Leonardo da Vinci was fascinated by how the most mundane patterns of everyday objects could entrall the imagination.

"If you look at any walls spotted with various stains ... you will be able to see divers combats and figures in quick movement, and strange expression of faces, and outlandish costumes," Leonardo remarked.

Pareidolia has inspired poets, writer and artists, as Shakespeare memorable described in *Antony and Cleopatra*, "Sometimes we see a cloud that's dragonish,

A vapour sometimes like a bear or lion,

A towered citadel, or pendant rock."

Speak directly to one of our forecasters on 09065 777675

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Sport

Galopin Des Champs dies after injury in field

Galopin Des Champs, who was retired from racing just five days ago, has died. The ten-year-old won consecutive Cheltenham Gold Cups in 2023 and 2024 but was set to switch to eventing under the care of former leading jockey Ruby Walsh's daughter, Isabelle.

Walsh released a statement yesterday that said: "Sadly, Galopin Des Champs suffered an injury in his field and could not be saved. When I went to get him for exercise, I found him with a severe injury, high up on his near front leg. He was attended to by our vets immediately, but x-rays revealed extensive, unrepairable damage."

Hamilton Park

Rob Wright

4.50 Sod Hall Lane
5.20 Edgewater Drive
5.50 Clocker (nap)
6.20 Harley (nb)
6.50 Annie Edson Taylor
7.20 Palmarian
7.50 Uncle Liam

Going: soft
Draw: no advantage — **Racing TV**

4.50 Maiden Stakes (2-Y-O: £6,210: 5f) (8 runners)

1 (6) 53 **BACHA** 32 R & P Fahey 9-7 — **O Orr**
2 (7) 0 **PERRYSTON** 44 K Ryan 9-7 — **K Stott**
3 (2) 43 **ROYAL STRIKE** 19 K R Burke 9-7 — **C Lee**
4 (3) **SNEAKIN PETE** R M Smith 9-7 — **JP Sullivan**
5 (8) 2 **SOD HALL LANE** 26 D Carroll 9-7 — **Z Wheatley**
6 (5) 63606 **STAY ON TAB** 8 (T) I Jardine 9-7 — **J Nicholls (3)**
7 (1) 54 **CLASSYFIED** 9 T Easterby 9-2 — **D Allan**
8 (4) 54 **DADAWADA** 11 (H) C Kellett 9-2 — **F Bughanaim**

5-4 Sod Hall Lane, 5-1 Royal Strike, 11-2 Bacha, 13-2 Classyfied, 10-1 others.

Rob Wright's choice: Sod Hall Lane, second to a subsequent winner at Musselburgh, appeals **Dangers** Royal Strike, Bacha

5.20 Handicap (£3,664: 6f) (13)

1 (3) 4310- **EDGEWATER DRIVE** 298 (W,T,D) W Storey 5-9-9 — **G Fairley**
2 (9) 31465 **LUMENBOURG** 41 (P,D) J Camacho 5-9-9 — **C Lee**
3 (7) 13005 **IRIS DANCER** 12 (B,CD) T Davidson 8-9-8 — **R Scott**
4 (13) 10645 **CAMERA SHY** 27 (T,D) M Dods 4-9-6 — **C Beasley**
5 (6) 43002 **VALENTINE CATCHER** 22 (P,D) T Easterby 5-9-6 — **D Allan**
6 (10) -0500 **LESLEY'S BOY** 17 (V,D) R & P Fahey 4-9-5 — **O Orr**
7 (11) 00605 **MEN OF HONOUR** 11 R Carr 4-9-4 — **JP Sullivan**
8 (1) 63600 **IMPRESSOR** 12 (P,CD) Phillip Makin 9-9-1 — **S James**
9 (2) 42542 **BIG APPLE JACK** 14 (B) M & D Easterby 4-9-1 — **B Garritty**
10 (5) 04010 **WHITE UMBRELLA** 13 (B,D) C Kellett 7-9-0 — **P Mulrennan**
11 (8) 66400 **MOUNT RUAPEHU** 13 (BF,D) I Jardine 6-9-0 — **J Nicholls (3)**
12 (4) 10055 **DOON THE GLEN** 12 (V,CD) J Goldie 6-8-7 — **S Farmer (5)**
13 (12) 02663 **SUMMERSTORMS DREAM** 22 (P) J Goldie 4-8-4 — **Lauren Young (5)**

7-2 Edgewater Drive, 9-2 Big Apple Jack, 7-1 Valentine Catcher, 8-1 others.

Wright choice: Edgewater Drive handles these conditions and goes well fresh **Dangers** Valentine Catcher, Impressor

5.50 Handicap (£4,187: 1m 5f) (12)

1 (9) 154-1 **PERSEUS WAY** J73 (CD) T Davidson 7-10-2 — **R Scott**
2 (4) 30-60 **SIMPLY RUBY** 23 D Sayer 4-10-0 — **JP Sullivan**
3 (3) 00000 **OURO PRETO** 32 I Jardine 5-9-9 — **G Fairley**
4 (11) 06655 **SPANISH HUSTLE** 16 (C) J Goldie 8-9-8 — **P Mulrennan**
5 (7) 46121 **CLOCKER** 18 (C) E Bethell 3-9-6 — **Oisin Orr**
6 (10) 60340 **IBN ALTHEEB** 25 (B) I Jardine 3-9-2 — **C Lee**
7 (2) 0-340 **BILLY NO MATES** 75 M Dods 10-9-2 — **C Beasley**
8 (8) 42530 **KINDLY QUEEN** 39 (P) C Kellett 3-9-1 — **F Bughanaim**
9 (5) 0060 **PATH TO PEACE** 25 (T,V) K Scott 3-9-1 — **S Gray**
10 (6) 5-240 **WOOTTON'S GAL** 32 R & P Fahey 3-9-0 — **B Garritty**
11 (1) 04313 **EBONY MAW** 22 (B,T,D) Ewan Whillans 9-9-0 — **K Stott**
12 (12) -3465 **AIGHEAR** 48 (C,D) J Goldie 8-8-11 — **Lauren Young (5)**

5-4 Clocker, 2-1 Perseus Way, 8-1 Ebony Maw, 10-1 Billy No Mates, Ibn Altheeb,12-1 Aighear, 14-1 Spanish Hustle, 20-1 others.

Wright choice: Clocker is improving rapidly now that her stamina is being tested **Dangers** Perseus Way, Wootton's Gal

6.20 Nursery (2-Y-O: £20,616: 6f) (8)

1 (1) 2312 **BATTLE FEVER** 13 K Ryan 9-9 — **K Stott**
2 (7) 52321 **HARLEY** 22 (CD) E Bethell 8-13 — **D Tudhope**
3 (2) 342 **TRUMPETY TRUMP** 12 J Goldie 8-10 — **Lauren Young (5)**
4 (3) 10000 **WILD TERRAIN** 6 (B,T,CD) H Palmer 8-9 — **J Nicholls (3)**
5 (6) 62642 **SEA MIRAGE** 22 K Ryan 8-6 — **S Farmer (5)**
6 (4) 53000 **RBFLYING** 13 (T) T Easterby 8-4 — **JP Sullivan**
7 (8) 6335 **ONSLAUGHT** 22 R & P Fahey 8-2 — **E Tindall (5)**
8 (5) 6644 **BOUTBLUMMINTIME** 33 A Keatley 8-2 — **F Bassett (7)**

13-8 Battle Fever, 15-8 Harley, 13-2 Sea Mirage, 15-2 others.

Wright choice: Harley can follow up his recent course and distance success **Dangers** Battle Fever, Sea Mirage

6.50 Handicap (£4,187: 6f) (10)

1 (5) 6-010 **CALL ME BETTY** 86 (BF,D) M Dods 4-10-0 — **C Beasley**
2 (1) 00643 **MAE AMOR** 28 (V,CD) R Menzies 4-10-0 — **D Allan**
3 (10) 23420 **DIAMONT KATIE** 36 (D) K R Burke 4-9-13 — **C Lee**
4 (8) 41-30 **LILY PEARL** 90 (D) R & P Fahey 3-9-12 — **E Tindall (5)**
5 (3) 26201 **THUNDERSTORM KATIE** 25 (C,D) J Goldie 5-9-7 — **Lauren Young (5)**
6 (2) 13120 **INVINCIBLE RUBY** 26 (D) I Jardine 4-9-7 — **J Nicholls (3)**
7 (7) 20203 **PICKERSGILL** 22 (D) I Jardine 4-9-6 — **P Mulrennan**
8 (9) 3-220 **KILFRUSH DESERT** 21 K Ryan 3-9-5 — **K Stott**
9 (4) 46160 **ANNIE EDSON TAYLOR** 25 (P,T,CD) Phillip Makin 5-9-2 — **S James**
10 (6) 03326 **WHISKEY KISSES** 12 R M Smith 3-8-13 — **JP Sullivan**

9-2 Diamont Katie, 5-1 Thunderstorm Katie, 6-1 Mae Amor, 8-1others.

Wright choice: Annie Edson Taylor was badly drawn at Ayr; can bounce back **Dangers** Mae Amor, Diamont Katie

7.20 Handicap (£3,664: 1m) (10)

1 (4) 00632 **TEE AITCH AYE** 23 (P,C) I Jardine 5-9-12 — **J Nicholls (3)**
2 (7) 51204 **PALMARIAN** 19 (H,D) R Carr 4-9-12 — **JP Sullivan**
3 (5) 00555 **KEATS HOUSE** 37 (D) M & D Easterby 4-9-11 — **B Garritty**
4 (8) 60600 **KELPIE GREY** 23 (BF,D) J Goldie 6-9-11 — **P Mulrennan**
5 (6) 05435 **PENELOPE'S SISTER** 23 (C,D) J Goldie 6-9-10 — **S Farmer (5)**
6 (10) 53304 **YAASER** 23 (D) J Goldie 8-9-9 — **Lauren Young (5)**
7 (9) 25600 **MIMI'S MAGIC** 15 E Dunlop 3-9-6 — **D Tudhope**
8 (1) 53603 **AURELUNE** 60 R & P Fahey 3-9-5 — **O Orr**
9 (2) 00040 **SCHEFFLER** 30 (B) Adrian Nicholls 3-9-5 — **C Beasley**
10 (3) 22600 **TOY SOLDIER** 26 (B) L Russell & M Scudamore 4-9-4 — **Lexie Clarkson (7)**

3-1 Tee Aitch Aye, 5-1 Aurelune, Yaaser, 6-1 Penelope's Sister, 7-1 Palmarian, 8-1 Keats House, Kelpie Grey, 10-1 Toy Soldier.

Wright choice: Palmarian drops in class after a fair fourth in a stronger contest at Thirsk **Dangers** Yaaser, Aurelune

7.50 Handicap (£3,664: 1m 3f) (9)

1 (5) 13342 **ANNANDALE** 6 (BF,CD) J Goldie 8-9-9 — **P Mulrennan**
2 (3) 63331 **SOPHIESTICATE** 33 R M Smith 7-9-8 — **S Farmer (5)**
3 (6) 26122 **DUBAI VENTURE** 25 (BF) Miss T Jackson 5-9-8 — **D Allan**
4 (7) 2020- **VAMPIRE SLAYER** J166 (P) D Bourke 6-9-8 — **S Gray**
5 (2) 01065 **HICKTON** 13 (C) D Carroll 4-9-6 — **Z Wheatley**
6 (4) 00154 **UNCLE LIAM** 59 (C) J Goldie 4-9-3 — **D Tudhope**
7 (9) 20324 **FALAISE BLANC** 6 (V) K Scott 4-8-12 — **R Scott**
8 (8) 00366 **DANDY'S ANGEL** 5 (C) J Wainwright 9-8-12 — **C Beasley**
9 (1) 0-006 **SPIRIT OF NATURE** 22 J Goldie 4-8-12 — **Lauren Young (5)**

2-1 Sophiesticate, 3-1 Annandale, Dubai Venture, 7-1 Vampire Slayer, 8-1 others.

Wright choice: Uncle Liam is unexposed at this trip; still fairly weighted **Dangers** Dubai Venture, Dandy's Angel

Bath

Rob Wright

2.00 Etienne
2.30 The Feminine Urge
3.00 Sisters In The Sky
3.30 Symbol Of Hope
4.00 Basilette
4.30 Malakai Kite
5.02 Aravalli
5.35 Belle Amie

Going: good, good to firm in places
Draw: no advantage — **Sky Sports Racing**

2.00 Maiden Stakes (2-Y-O: £4,320: 6f) (6)

1 (4) 360 **ANNA BELARDO** 104 Dr R Newland 9-7 — **G Mangan**
2 (5) 24 **ETIENNE** 46 (BF) R Spencer 9-7 — **S Osborne**
3 (1) 02344 **OUR FELLA** 2 (P) J S Moore 9-7 — **Isobelle Chalmers (7)**
4 (2) 02623 **TREE WIZARD** 10 (P) H Kobeissi 9-7 — **Abdulla Al-hajri (5)**
5 (6) 6 **COTAI JAUNT** 8 Ollie Sangster 9-2 — **S D Bowen**
6 (3) 56 **POLLY THE SNIPER** 15 T Dascombe 9-2 — **W Cox**

1-3 Etienne, 8-1 Anna Belardo, Tree Wizard, 12-1 Polly The Sniper, 20-1 others.

2.30 Handicap (Div I: £3,454: 6f) (9)

1 (7) 03265 **THE FEMININE URGE** 20 (D) G Harris 4-9-9 — **Ashley Lewis (3)**
2 (4) 0-05F **TEN CLUB** 48 (H,D) A Wintle 5-9-9 — **F Marsh**
3 (8) 04361 **KEN BRULEE** 24 (P,D) M Usher 3-9-6 — **R Hornby**
4 (5) 55520 **STARSONG** 17 (P,D) M Appleby 7-9-5 — **A Rawlinson**
5 (1) 0-460 **IT'S A MUGS GAME** 2 J Tickle 3-9-4 — **Taylor Fisher**
6 (6) 10500 **PORT HEDLAND** 10 (CD) A Carroll 5-9-2 — **K Fox**
7 (9) 20-54 **ANGLESEY LAD** 112 S Dixon 5-9-0 — **K O'Neill**
8 (2) 56500 **RINKY TINKY TINKY** 11 (P,D) Mrs I G-Leveque 4-9-0 — **Alice Bond (5)**
9 (3) 03440 **MY BOY JACK** 10 (V,D) K Frost 7-9-0 — **Olivia Haines (7)**

7-4 Ken Brulee, 4-1 The Feminine Urge, 6-1 My Boy Jack, 7-1 others.

3.00 Handicap (Div II: £3,454: 6f) (9)

1 (7) 4640P **UP THE ANTI** 106 (CD) A Carroll 4-9-9 — **Jack Doughty**
2 (9) 42045 **HONOUR YOUR DREAMS** 36 (T,C,D) M Attwater 6-9-7 — **K Fox**
3 (2) 05334 **GEEMANN** 2 J Tickle 3-9-5 — **Taylor Fisher**
4 (4) 00-06 **TEN CUIDADO** 15 (P) M Usher 3-9-4 — **R Hornby**
5 (6) 06-00 **CICI'S SECRET** 24 (H) Charlie Pike 3-9-2 — **E Greatrex**
6 (8) 40234 **SISTERS IN THE SKY** 16 (P,CD) G Harris 7-9-0 — **T Heard**
7 (1) 0-630 **I WAS THINKING** 33 A Wintle 5-9-0 — **F Marsh**
8 (3) 30400 **DALEY T** 10 (P) A Carroll 6-9-0 — **W Carson**
9 (5) 34345 **ROGUE REBELLION** 24 R Harris 3-8-12 — **L Morris**

3-1 Honour Your Dreams, 7-2 Sisters In The Sky, Geemann, 6-1 others.

3.30 Handicap (£3,454: 5f) (10)

1 (7) 66533 **RECON MISSION** 11 (D) A Carroll 10-9-9 — **L Morris**
2 (2) -0063 **CALL TIME** 5 (P,CD) J S Moore 5-9-6 — **Taylor Fisher**
3 (8) 64360 **MART** 13 (B,T,D) D Donovan 5-9-6 — **R Kavanagh (3)**
4 (3) 02040 **STAPLEFORD PARK** 11 M Attwater 4-9-5 — **S C Cronin (5)**
5 (6) 06416 **COOLAGH MAGIC** 11 (D) A Carson 10-9-5 — **W Carson**
6 (4) 05202 **FANCY DANCER** 7 (P,C,D) Hayley Burton 4-9-4 — **S Osborne**
7 (1) 53216 **JACKIE BROWN** 16 (T,BF,C) A Wintle 6-9-3 — **F Marsh**
8 (9) 12266 **WEDGEWOOD** 72 (CD) A Carroll 6-9-2 — **T Marquand**
9 (10) 04320 **SYMBOL OF HOPE** 16 (P,CD) G Harris 8-9-1 — **C Hutchinson**
10 (5) 0-605 **HI HOH TONTO** 114 N Littmoden 7-9-0 — **G Mangan**

100-30 Call Time, 7-2 Fancy Dancer, 4-1 Recon Mission, 8-1 others.

4.00 Handicap (£3,454: 1m 6f) (10)

1 (6) 4-040 **TROOPER** 25 (B) N Mulholland 6-9-9 — **L Morris**
2 (9) 31362 **BASILETTE** 12 (P,C) Seamus Mullins 7-9-7 — **G Downing**
3 (8) 0-226 **JUST ADAIR** 36 (P,T) J & A O'Neill 4-9-7 — **P Cosgrave**
4 (5) 0-023 **FRAM CASTLE** 25 (V) M Wigham 5-9-6 — **A Egan (7)**
5 (1) 0R005 **PROPHET SQUEEZE** 12 (H) B J Murphy (Ire) 8-9-3 — **C Howarth (3)**
6 (7) 65-06 **CHERRY COLA** 42 (P,CD) Miss S West 10-9-1 — **T Heard**
7 (4) 05044 **ALEX THE GREAT** 27 (T,D) A Carroll 6-9-0 — **W Carson**
8 (3) 6-066 **NORA BARNACLE** 81 D F Davis 4-9-0 — **B Ffrench-Davis (5)**
9 (10) 06464 **NOTABLE CHARM** 11 (B) M Tregoning 3-8-10 — **R Hornby**
10 (2) 65065 **LADY LAUREN** 27 E De Giles 3-8-6 — **G Mangan**

2-1 Fram Castle, 9-4 Basilette, 4-1 Just Adair, 7-1 Prophet Squeeze, 8-1 others.

4.30 Handicap (£3,454: 1m) (14)

1 (10) 04045 **EAGLE DAY** 31 (D) P Evans 6-9-9 — **R Hornby**
2 (7) 0/00- **WILDFELL** 405 (B,D) J & R Flint 6-9-7 — **W Carson**
3 (5) 26413 **HAVANA CLUB** 30 (CD) A Wintle 4-9-6 — **F Marsh**
4 (13) 40121 **BLUE HERO** 33 (CD) A Wintle 8-9-6 — **J Leavy**
5 (12) 21055 **SCEPTIC** 18 (D) I Williams 6-9-6 — **R Kavanagh (3)**
6 (9) 16065 **MBAPPE** 18 (P,D) M Loughnane 5-9-5 — **J Callan**
7 (4) -2253 **ELECTRIC BASS** 48 R Teal 4-9-5 — **D Costello**
8 (6) 02305 **THESTRAL** 29 (P) A Carroll 3-9-4 — **J Doughty**
9 (8) 22620 **GALACTIC GLOW** 24 (C) J Tickle 9-9-4 — **Taylor Fisher**
10 (1) 22132 **BUCKLAND BELLE** 9 (BF,D) Ollie Sangster 3-9-4 — **T Marquand**
11 (14) 160-1 **LOVELY JUBLY** 56 (CD) M Attwater 5-9-4 — **Doubtful**
12 (2) 00415 **AMATHUS** 20 (V) P Chamings 9-9-3 — **C Hutchinson**
13 (11) 4353 **MALAKAI KITE** 32 (H) R Harris 3-9-3 — **L Morris**
14 (3) 00655 **WHO IS ALICE** 9 (H) G Harris 3-9-1 — **G Bass**

3-1 Blue Hero, 7-2 Buckland Belle, 5-1 Havana Club, 10-1others.

5.02 Handicap (£10,468: 1m 4f) (6)

1 (5) 64-33 **QUEBELLA** 82 (BF) Owen Burrows 4-10-2 — **J P Spencer**
2 (1) 21140 **PIERIAN** 33 W Haggas 3-9-12 — **T Marquand**
3 (3) 05253 **SPIRIT OF JURA** 47 C Johnston 4-9-12 — **C Shepherd**
4 (4) 30031 **MYTHICAL BIRD** 21 H Morrison 4-9-10 — **R Hornby**
5 (6) 11411 **ARAVALLI** 20 (D) J Tickle 3-9-7 — **Taylor Fisher**
6 (2) 23213 **ASSET** 22 Sir M Prescott 3-9-3 — **L Morris**

5-2 Asset, 3-1 Mythical Bird, 7-2 Aravalli, 5-1 Quebella, 13-2 others.

5.35 Handicap (£3,454: 1m 4f) (6)

1 (4) 50-03 **SHAFFRON** 111 D Menuisier 4-9-9 — **S Osborne**
2 (3) 26253 **JODHPUR BLUE** 30 (T) I Williams 5-9-9 — **E Greatrex**
3 (1) 26325 **TROJAN TRUTH** 16 (B,D) E De Giles 7-9-8 — **L Morris**
4 (6) 56213 **OFFIAH'S BOY** 19 (CD) J Tickle 5-9-5 — **Taylor Fisher**
5 (5) 14143 **BELLE AMIE** 18 (CD) D M Simcock 4-9-4 — **C Shepherd**
6 (2) 05524 **DOUGLAS DC** 15 (B) A Carroll 8-8-11 — **K Fox**

5-2 Shaffron, 3-1 Offiah's Boy, 4-1 Jodhpur Blue, 6-1 Douglas Dc, Belle Amie, 8-1 Trojan Truth.

Newcastle

Rob Wright

1.45 Kameel
2.15 Baldosa
2.45 Yordan
3.15 Highland Shah
3.45 Profitability
4.15 Bee Farmer
4.45 Papa Don't Preach
5.15 Book Of Life
5.45 Barleybrown

Going: standard
Draw: no advantage — **Sky Sports Racing**

1.45 Handicap (£3,245: 1m 2f) (8)

1 (1) 60000 **IT'S A LOVE THING** 125 (CD) S England 8-9-9 — **C Horgan**
2 (5) -0540 **RAVENSCRAIG CASTLE** 23 (B) I Jardine 8-9-9 — **C Tuke (5)**
3 (2) 00016 **LOVE YOU MORE** 17 (H) J Parr 4-9-7 — **Harry Vigors**
4 (3) 24445 **KAMEEL** 24 (V,C) Jessica Macey 4-9-7 — **J Dace**
5 (8) -3323 **KOKO BLUE** 29 (BF) Tom Clover 4-9-6 — **Molly Keegan-Price (5)**
6 (6) 03023 **MILLBUIE** 23 (B,T) Ewan Whillans 5-9-3 — **R Elliott**
7 (7) 000-4 **GAME MANAGEMENT** 23 (C) Lizzie Quinlan 5-9-3 — **J Dickson (3)**
8 (4) 60035 **BRIDGEFOOT RAMBLER** 23 (B) S Hanlon 4-9-2 — **C Whiteley**

11-4 Koko Blue, 7-2 Millbuie, 5-1 Game Management, 6-1 Bridgefoot Rambler, 7-1 Love You More, 8-1 Ravenscraig Castle, 10-1 Kameel, 20-1 It's A Love Thing.

2.15 Handicap (3-Y-O: £3,245: 1m 2f) (12)

1 (3) 24641 **DALAMARA** 8 (P,C) B Haslam 10-0(6ex) — **A Mullen**
2 (7) 002-0 **NEW OBJECTIVE** 109 K Frost 9-9 — **W Pyle**
3 (8) 55660 **GIFTS DIFFERING** 27 R Burdon 9-9 — **J Hart**
4 (4) 05050 **RUGBY UNION** 23 G Tutty 9-8 — **Joanna Mason**
5 (10) -0006 **PAROLE OFFICER** 23 (P) Ewan Whillans 9-7 — **B McHugh**
6 (6) 5-004 **GILLEANGIRL** 27 (T) I Furtado 9-7 — **K Shoemark**
7 (1) 24136 **BALDOSA** 37 (BF,D) N Tinkler 9-4 — **F McManoman**
8 (5) 00000 **CLOVA ROYALE** 42 (P) P Niven 9-1 — **M Winn**
9 (12) 55000 **GALISTRA** 25 (P) A Brown 9-1 — **T Eaves**
10 (2) 42406 **DIAMOND AURA** 25 (P) T Easterby 9-0 — **P J McDonald**
11 (11) 06006 **GO TEEJAY** 27 Craig Lidster 9-0 — **A Jary (3)**
12 (9) 060 **NEFYN QUEEN** 137 (V) S Hanlon 9-0 — **C Whiteley (5)**

6-4 Dalamara, 5-1 Baldosa, 6-1 Diamond Aura, 15-2 Gilleangirl, Go Teejay, 10-1 Rugby Union, 20-1 Parole Officer, 25-1 Nefyn Queen, Gifts Differing, New Objective.

2.45 Novice Stakes (£5,400: 6f) (11)

1 (5) 21 **YORDAN** 17 (D) K Ryan 3-9-11 — **H Vigors (5)**
2 (9) 055 **RAKE LANE** 41 M Walford 4-9-6 — **J Garritty**
3 (6) 04 **ALPHA PLATOON** 75 P Kirby 3-9-4 — **C Hardie**
4 (4) 03242 **BRASH** 32 D & N Barron 3-9-4 — **Joanna Mason**
5 (2) 36-U5 **ENNOBLE** 61 A Brittain 3-9-4 — **H Russell**
6 (1) 4 **TRIPLE P** 45 T Easterby 3-9-4 — **D Fentiman**
7 (7) 00 **MYSTIC WAVE** 13 D Thompson 4-9-1 — **A Brookes**
8 (8) 3-4 **JOUD** 91 E Bethell 3-8-13 — **C Horgan (5)**
9 (11) 50 **MIDNIGHT SERENADE** 22 R M Smith 3-8-13 — **T Kiely-Marshall (5)**
10 (3) 5 **MISS TINO** 16 D Thompson 3-8-13 — **B McHugh**
11 (10) 40 **NAVERTITY** 13 S Hanlon 3-8-13 — **J Hart**

10-11 Yordan, 7-2 Brash, 8-1 Ennoble, 10-1 Alpha Platoon, 12-1 Triple P, Rake Lane, 20-1 Joud, Navertity.

3.15 Handicap (£3,978: 7f) (12)

1 (10) 00-00 **HAVANAGREATTIME** 15 (D) R Carr 5-10-0 — **Joanna Mason**
2 (9) 31000 **HAVANA PRINCE** 14 (CD) T Coyle & K Wood 5-9-13 — **T Eaves**
3 (7) -0050 **BLOODSWEATANDTYRES** 19 (B,CD) B Ellison 4-9-10 — **MP Sheehy**
4 (1) 30306 **ORNE** 40 (B,D) A Brittain 5-9-10 — **C Hardie**
5 (5) 10064 **UP THE AGENDA** 15 (C,D) Jack Morland 3-9-8 — **C Whiteley (5)**
6 (8) 06503 **BEATTIE IS BACK** 27 (CD) R & P Fahey 7-9-8 — **W Fentiman (3)**
7 (2) 5540- **HONVED** 460 F Watson 4-9-7 — **R Elliott (5)**
8 (11) 3-413 **HIGHLAND SHAH** 55 (H,D) J Camacho 3-9-6 — **R Sexton**
9 (3) 63000 **TASEVER** 39 (P,CD) P Morris 6-9-4 — **T Kiely-Marshall (5)**
10 (4) 20004 **JUDICATURE** 33 (C) J Parkinson & S Smith 4-9-2 — **B McHugh**
11 (6) 00261 **LESSAY** 66 (P,D) P Morris 5-9-0 — **C Horgan (5)**
12 (12) 4-400 **DOUWANTITRIGHTNOW** 79 K Ryan 3-8-11 — **O McSweeney**

5-2 Highland Shah, 11-4 Lessay, 5-1 Orne, 13-2 Beattie Is Back, 7-1 Up The Agenda, 15-2 Judicature, 20-1 Havana Prince, 25-1 Honved.

3.45 Nursery (2-Y-O: £3,245: 6f) (11)

1 (9) 35500 **EEVEE STAR** 16 (B) E Bethell 9-9 — **P J McDonald**
2 (10) 563 **PROFITABILITY** 22 Craig Lidster 9-8 — **T Eaves**
3 (8) 0600 **SECRET RIVAL** 20 E Walker 9-8 — **K Shoemark**
4 (2) 04205 **LIVEADREAM** 33 Phillip Makin 9-7 — **C Whiteley (5)**
5 (6) 500 **WAITING FOR ARCHIE** 60 R & P Fahey 9-7 — **B McHugh**
6 (3) 050 **RIVER JORDAN** 32 Phillip Makin 9-6 — **J Hart**
7 (1) 500 **CLARET TIME** 46 (H) N Tinkler 9-5 — **A Jary (3)**
8 (4) 6050 **KAIULANI SPIRIT** 20 (P) T Easterby 9-3 — **O McSweeney**
9 (11) 0640 **JOHNS POWER** 20 Roger Fell 9-3 — **Joanna Mason**
10 (7) 340 **BLADEY LADY** 86 T Easterby 9-2 — **D Fentiman**
11 (5) 5000 **YORKSHIRE DREAM** 20 (P) B Haslam 8-9 — **A Mullen**

100-30 Profitability, 4-1 Secret Rival, 7-1 Johns Power, Waiting For Archie, Eevee Star, Claret Time, 10-1 Bladey Lady, River Jordan.

4.15 Handicap (£3,978: 1m) (11)

1 (6) 05220 **MR MISTOFFELEES** 25 (B,CD) S England 6-10-0 — **T Eaves**
2 (7) 40000 **HARRY THE ROGUE** 25 (D) S Hanlon 5-9-12 — **C Whiteley (5)**
3 (9) 04526 **RISING FORCE** 19 (BF,D) J Butler 5-9-12 — **MP Sheehy**
4 (4) 65030 **BOWOOD** 39 (CD) I Furtado 6-9-11 — **Elle-May Croot (5)**
5 (2) 62045 **BEE FARMER** 34 (B,T) E Bethell 3-9-9 — **P J McDonald**
6 (1) 06000 **SUNRISEONTHEBOYNE** 32 (D) B Haslam 4-9-9 — **A Mullen**
7 (5) 10606 **CRIMINAL SHORE** 18 (V,CD) D O'Meara 4-9-9 — **M Winn**
8 (11) 43060 **FLYING FLETCHER** 21 (CD) R & P Fahey 5-9-7 — **W Fentiman (3)**
9 (3) 200-0 **DRAGONFLAME** 103 R Menzies 4-9-6 — **J Hart**
10 (8) 02262 **STARLINER** 18 (P,C,D) Miss L Perratt 5-9-1 — **W Pyle**
11 (10) 40000 **NATZOR** 25 (P,C) Lizzie Quinlan 6-8-10 — **Molly Keegan-Price (7)**

15-8 Starliner, 4-1 Rising Force, 5-1 Criminal Shore, 8-1 Mr Mistoffelees, 10-1 Bowood, Bee Farmer, 14-1 Sunriseontheboyne, Flying Fletcher.

4.45 Handicap (£3,245: 5f) (9)

1 (3) 03411 **LET'S GO HUGO** 8 (P,CD) O Pears 6-10-0(5ex) — **T Kiely-Marshall (5)**
2 (5) 30326 **PAPA DON'T PREACH** 16 (P,CD) K Frost 7-9-9 — **O Stammers**
3 (8) 62504 **PIVOTAL TERMS** 23 (C) I Jardine 3-9-6 — **A Mullen**
4 (1) 64600 **HEATHERS FEATHER** 14 (P) T Waggott 3-9-6 — **J Hart**
5 (2) 02665 **SANDS OF SEVE** 9 (D) Mr W G Harrison 3-9-5 — **B McHugh**
6 (7) 43401 **LADY BOUQUET** 9 (P,D) P Kirby 5-9-4(5ex) — **Joanna Mason**
7 (9) 35226 **ELLIE'S DE VEGA** 11 (B) P Kirby 3-9-2 — **C Hardie**
8 (4) 04250 **SHATIN VENTURE** 180 (CD) Miss L Perratt 5-9-0 — **M Winn**
9 (6) -0035 **MUDDY NORA** 34 S Spencer 3-8-13 — **D Swift**

5-2 Lady Bouquet, 11-4 Let's Go Hugo, 6-1 Papa Don't Preach, 8-1 Pivotal Terms, 10-1 Ellie's De Vega, Sands of Seve, 12-1 Muddy Nora, 16-1 others.

5.15 Handicap (Div I: £3,245: 1m) (10)

1 (5) 45203 **BOOK OF LIFE** 7 (P,BF) P Morris 6-9-9 — **J Hart**
2 (3) 60052 **MERCURIUS POWER** 39 (P,T,CD) Jessica Macey 8-9-8 — **J Dace (5)**
3 (6) -0001 **HEAR THE DRUMS** 27 (D) R & P Fahey 3-9-5 — **W Fentiman (3)**
4 (1) 0-640 **BLAIRTUM NIGHT** 14 (P) Miss L Perratt 4-9-5 — **T Kiely-Marshall (5)**
5 (10) 02105 **SASSY GLORY** 25 (V,CD) M Walford 5-9-4 — **R Elliott (5)**
6 (9) 03452 **ELETTARIA** 21 (P,C) J Wainwright 7-9-2 — **C Hardie**
7 (4) 0-060 **ONE MORE BOTTLE** 25 (B,D) Lizzie Quinlan 5-9-1 — **B McHugh**
8 (8) 35003 **SODA** 27 G Tutty 3-9-0 — **Joanna Mason**
9 (7) -0000 **FURRST LADY** 21 Roger Fell 4-9-0 — **O McSweeney**
10 (2) 3-050 **QUEENIES PAL** 48 (P,T) P Kirby 3-8-9 — **A Brookes**

5-2 Hear The Drums, 7-2 Book Of Life, 4-1 Elettaria, 9-2 Mercurius Power, 7-1 Soda, 12-1 Sassy Glory, 16-1 One More Bottle, 33-1 others.

5.45 Handicap (Div II: £3,245: 1m) (9)

1 (6) 66205 **BARLEYBROWN** 17 (P,CD) R Carr 6-9-9 — **Joanna Mason**
2 (9) 00510 **DEFENCE MISSILE** 32 (P,CD) Miss L Perratt 4-9-7 — **T Kiely-Marshall (5)**
3 (1) 500 **THUNDER RUSH** 41 T Coyle & K Wood 3-9-6 — **T Eaves**
4 (3) 0040- **SOHAM'S ROGER** 310 N Mechie 4-9-5 — **A Elliott**
5 (2) 06220 **HERE COMES LOUIE** 25 (BF) Roger Fell 3-9-3 — **C Whiteley (5)**
6 (5) 06652 **ITSZABOY** 25 N Tinkler 3-9-2 — **A Jary (3)**
7 (4) 40520 **WALK ON WALK ON** 36 (P) P Kirby 3-9-2 — **R Sexton**
8 (7) 32050 **LADY DELILA** 58 (P) P Morris 6-9-1 — **J Hart**
9 (8) 00000 **THE FLOORS MUNKY** 39 (W) Gary Rutherford 3-8-10 — **R Elliott (5)**

2-1 Itszaboy, 4-1 Here Comes Louie, 9-2 Barleybrown, 6-1 Lady Delila, 7-1 Walk On Walk On, 8-1 Defence Missile, 16-1 Thunder Rush, 50-1 others.

Kempton Park

Rob Wright

5.30 Superstorm
6.00 Chain Letter
6.30 Blue Victory
7.00 Fortitudine
7.30 Overbudget
8.00 Shaman Champion
8.30 Madjid

Going: standard to slow
Draw: 5f-1m, low numbers best — **Racing TV**

5.30 Handicap (3-Y-O: £4,187: 7f) (8)

1 (1) 26-26 **SOMETHING COMING** 23 P Chapple-Hyam 10-0 — **O Tubb**
2 (4) 0533 **BUNDOK** 82 H Morrison 9-13 — **A Redman (5)**
3 (8) 00034 **UNIONVILLE** 14 M Attwater 9-12 — **O Lewis (3)**
4 (2) 22111 **MUSICAL SOLDIER** 8 (P,T,D) Ollie Sangster 9-12(6ex) — **Libby Swallow (7)**
5 (5) 65420 **VIVIANA** 14 C Johnston 9-8 — **O Carmichael (3)**
6 (7) 00042 **CHAPMAN'S PEAK** 18 (P,CD) E Dunlop 9-8 — **T Moore (3)**
7 (3) 62365 **ORANGE EMPEROR** 17 (H,P) J Fanshawe 9-7 — **D J Murphy (3)**
8 (6) 66412 **SUPERSTORM** 9 (V,D) C Fellowes 8-11 — **M Mortensen**

2-1 Musical Soldier, 5-1 Chapman's Peak, Bundok, 11-2 Superstorm, 7-1 Unionville, 10-1 Orange Emperor, 12-1 Viviana, 16-1 Something Coming.

6.00 Maiden Stakes (2-Y-O: £6,480: 7f) (11)

1 (11) **ABERSOCH** (T) K P De Foy 9-7 — **D Egan**
2 (4) **ANAHONA** S & E Crisford 9-7 — **S De Sousa**
3 (6) **CHAIN LETTER** H Candy 9-7 — **N Currie**
4 (3) 0 **CHARLEMONT GG** 50 (H) M Botti 9-7 — **M Ghiani**
5 (2) 3 **GOLD ARMY** 28 Harry Charlton 9-7 — **L Edmunds**
6 (1) **INSCRIPTION** A Balding 9-7 — **S Foley**
7 (10) **JEEPERS FORTUNE** Harry Eustace 9-7 — **G Wood**
8 (5) **KINGDOM OF HEAVEN** J Butler 9-7 — **D Probert**
9 (7) **LE DRAKKAR** (T) K P De Foy 9-7 — **R Ryan**
10 (9) 06 **NIDAL** 12 S C Williams 9-7 — **R Dawson**
11 (8) 0 **OR EVER** 61 C Hills 9-7 — **C Fallon**

9-4 Gold Army, 5-2 Abersoch, 5-1 Inscription, 11-2 Le Drakkar, 8-1 Anahona, 12-1 Jeepers Fortune, 25-1 Charlemont Gg, Chain Letter.

6.30 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £5,940: 6f) (12)

1 (5) 4 **AL WIDYAN** 26 A Balding 9-7 — **W Buick**
2 (6) 04 **ASGAR** 87 C Cox 9-7 — **H Crouch**
3 (7) 5 **BLUE VICTORY** 33 W Knight 9-7 — **M Ghiani**
4 (3) 0 **COATIMUNDI** 62 C Hills 9-7 — **D Probert**
5 (1) 6 **FARASAN** 26 J & T Gosden 9-7 — **O Murphy**
6 (9) 3 **I AM ROYAL** 9 R Hughes 9-7 — **B Loughnane**
7 (12) 45 **STORMY WINTER** 19 S bin Suroor 9-7 — **C Fallon**
8 (10) 0 **AGENT ROSE** 84 S C Williams 9-2 — **R Dawson**
9 (2) **LOVE ALWAYS** Ollie Sangster 9-2 — **Libby Swallow (7)**
10 (8) 22 **SIERRA BELLE** 39 (BF) R Beckett 9-2 — **R Ryan**
11 (4) 65 **SNOW ON THE BEACH** 18 (H) James Owen 9-2 — **M Paetel (3)**
12 (11) 00 **SPIRIT OF PROGRESS** 21 Daisy Hitchins 9-2 — **S Donohoe**

15-8 Sierra Belle, 5-1 Al Widyan, Asgar, 6-1 I Am Royal, 13-2 Farasan, 14-1 Stormy Winter, Love Always, 16-1 Snow On The Beach, Blue Victory.

7.00 Novice Stakes (£6,480: 1m 3f) (6)

1 (2) 0 **ANCHOR** 28 (B) C Hobson 4-9-11 — **M Ghiani**
2 (1) 1 **FORTITUDINE** 28 (CD) C Appleby 3-9-11 — **W Buick**
3 (5) 0 **NO ORDINARY JOE** 28 R Stephens 10-9-11 — **D Probert**
4 (3) 41 **SHADOW ROAD** 28 (CD) J Butler 3-9-11 — **D Egan**
5 (6) 62025 **BRAVE HUNTER** 55 (V) I Mohammed & J Santos 3-9-4 — **B Loughnane**
6 (4) **ROXY POWER** S & E Crisford 3-9-4 — **S De Sousa**

1-3 Fortitudine, 7-2 Shadow Road, 10-1 Brave Hunter, 16-1 Roxy Power, 200-1 No Ordinary Joe, 250-1 Anchor.

7.30 Handicap (£4,187: 6f) (8)

1 (1) 14144 **ZOUSTAR DREAMS** 19 (P,D) E Dunlop 3-9-12 — **B Loughnane**
2 (6) -2430 **GOT THE BOOTY** 79 C Cox 3-9-12 — **R Ryan**
3 (8) -0000 **JUST QUEEN HIGH** 63 (D) I Williams 4-9-11 — **C Fallon**
4 (4) 52130 **AMELIA'S JOY** 16 (P,D) M Herrington 4-9-10 — **D Probert**
5 (2) 31042 **EGOTISTICAL** 16 (D) R Varian 3-9-10 — **R Dawson**
6 (7) 35310 **STARTLED LADY** 32 (D) W Knight 3-9-9 — **N Callan**
7 (5) 303D3 **REMI MAE** 21 (T) A Balding 3-9-7 — **O Murphy**
8 (3) 03060 **OVERBUDGET** 26 (T) M Appleby 3-9-2 — **M Paetel (3)**

2-1 Remi Mae, 5-2 Egotistical, 8-1 Zoustar Dreams, Amelia's Joy, 10-1 Overbudget, Got The Booty, Startled Lady, 20-1 Just Queen High.

8.00 Handicap (3-Y-O: £6,281: 7f) (8)

1 (4) -0510 **AIGEAS** 7 (T,C) Oliver Cole 9-9 — **M Paetel (3)**
2 (1) 03114 **SIERRA SANDS** 32 (D) E Dunlop 9-8 — **D Egan**
3 (6) -0003 **SHAMAN CHAMPION** 37 C Cox 9-8 — **R Ryan**
4 (5) 4421 **RAGGAAS** 25 (T,D) S & E Crisford 9-7 — **J Mitchell**
5 (3) -1526 **COMIC HERO** 81 (CD) A Balding 9-5 — **O Murphy**
6 (7) 23226 **HARDY'S HERO** 32 W Haggas 9-5 — **C Fallon**
7 (8) 02152 **MANLY FIREBALL** 34 (P) R Hughes 9-3 — **B Loughnane**
8 (2) 16322 **BLAKEFELL** 9 (BF,D) I Furtado 9-2 — **S De Sousa**

3-1 Raggaas, 7-2 Blakefell, 5-1 Comic Hero, Shaman Champion, 8-1 Manly Fireball, 10-1 Sierra Sands, Hardy's Hero, 12-1 Aigeas.

8.30 Handicap (£4,187: 1m 3f) (6)

1 (3) 10443 **JOSEPH** 16 (P) J Butler 4-10-2 — **D Egan**
2 (6) 05011 **MADJID** 7 (C) Harry Charlton 3-10-1(6ex) — **L Edmunds**
3 (5) 05051 **PERSHALLA** 16 (H,C,D) A Perrett 4-9-12 — **C Fallon**
4 (2) 32052 **EXTRATERRESTRIAL** 73 (P) S & E Crisford 3-9-9 — **B Loughnane**
5 (4) 56-5 **THATCHAM** 20 R Hannon 3-9-3 — **P Dobbs**
6 (1) 3-505 **ROGUE DESIRE** 90 (W,T) Jack Morland 3-9-2 — **N Callan**

Evens Madjid, 4-1 Pershalla, 5-1 Extraterrestrial, 6-1 Joseph, 10-1 Thatcham, 33-1 Rogue Desire.

Yesterday's racing results

Lingfield Park

Going: Standard

2.20 (1m 2f) 1, **Alazwar** (Miss Brodie Hampson, 6-1); 2, Little She (22-1); 3, Kurios Lady (33-1). 10 ran. nk, ½l. A Watson.

2.50 (6f 1yd) 1, **Storm Force** (James Doyle, 4-9 fav); 2, Gold Star Gazing (11-4); 3, Frantic (11-2). 4 ran. 2l, ½l. R A Fahey.

3.20 (7f 1yd) 1, **Nothing But Love** (Callum Hutchinson, 13-8); 2, Dusk Damsel (40-1); 3, For Ever Hopefull (7-1). 6 ran. 27½l, 17½l. Dr J D Scargill.

3.50 (5f 6yd) 1, **Elvetham** (Tom Marquand, 5-4); 2, Mart (7-2); 3, No Return (15-8). 5 ran. 2¼l, 1½l. C Allen.

4.20 (1m 5f) 1, **Hope Rising** (Rob Hornby, 11-4); 2, Percy Jones (18-1); 3, La Peregrina (4-5 fav). 5 ran. 37½l, 27½l. Jamie Snowden.

4.55 (1m 1yd) 1, **Laughterintherain** (Tom Marquand, 2-1); 2, Musical Soldier (11-8 fav); 3, Paranjape (8-1). 5 ran. 1l, 17½l. E Walker.

5.25 (6f 1yd) 1, **Horace Wallace** (J F Egan, 9-4); 2, Lahina Bay (9-1); 3, Far Too Fizzy (2-1 fav). 8 ran. 1l, ¾l. R A Fahey.

5.55 (1m) 1, **Rb Yas Sir** (D C Costello, 2-5 fav); 2, Jeewan (11-2); 3, Mobaasher (15-2). 4 ran. 2½l, 1½l. P Collington.

Placepot: £149.70
Quadpot: £11.80

Ripon

Going: Soft

2.10 (1m 1f 170yd) 1, **Yermanthere** (Rhys Elliott, 100-30); 2, Draupnir (4-1); 3, Poet's Dawn (6-1). 7 ran. ¾l, 1¼l. T D Easterby.

2.40 (5f) 1, **The Resdev Roman** (Joanna Mason, 11-1); 2, American Psycho (7-1); 3, Empress Princess (1-2). 5 ran. NR: Classyfied, Walt. 1¼l, 1½l. M & D Easterby.

3.10 (5f) 1, **May Bee In Profit** (D Allan, 9-1); 2, Star People (15-8 fav); 3, Lady Dublin (17-2). 6 ran. ½l, 1½l. T D Easterby.

3.40 (6f) 1, **Yes I'm Mali** (D Tudhope, 8-11 fav); 2, Kind Touch (5-1); 3, Top Juggler (9-1). 10 ran. nk, 2¼l. D O'Meara.

4.13 (6f) 1, **Farandaway** (Oliver Stammers, 9-2); 2, Almarada Prince (10-3); 3, Mister Sox (11-4). 8 ran. NR: First Folio, Fortamour. 1l, ½l. Grant Tuer.

4.48 (1m) 1, **Zermatt Star** (D Nolan, 40-1); 2, Gunalt Wavelength (10-1); 3, Milford Grange (9-2). 13 ran. 3l, 2¼l. T Coyle & K Wood.

5.18 (2m) 1, **Zimmerman** (D Allan, 15-8); 2, Bollin Neil (18-1); 3, Dereham (9-1). 6 ran. 4½l, 2¼l. T D Easterby.

Placepot: £166.50
Quadpot: £11.30

Brighton

Going: Good (good to firm in places)

4.06 (5f 60yd) 1, **Loleeta** (C R Lyons, 10-1); 2, My Mate Mackley (5-1); 3, Beach Partee (5-2). 6 ran. 17½l, hd. S C Williams.

4.36 (6f 210yd) 1, **Norfolk Blue** (Marco Ghiani, 4-11 fav); 2, Inspectre (6-1); 3, Twilight Baby (10-1). 4 ran. 1l, 3½l. W J Knight.

5.06 (1m 1f 207yd) 1, **Jenson Benson** (Gina Mangan, 9-2); 2, Makes Me Wonder (3-1 fav); 3, Thundering Breeze (15-2). 10 ran. ¾l, hd. S Lycett.

5.40 (1m 3f 198yd) 1, **Bug Boy** (Taryn Langley, null-null fav); 2, Highland Harvey (null-null fav); 3, Clipsham Noble (null-null fav). 8 ran. nk, nk. A G Newcombe.

6.15 (7f 216yd) 1, **Shes Got The Blues** (S De Sousa, 100-30); 2, King David (2-1 fav); 3, Turpin (14-1). 9 ran. 3l, 1½l. A W Carroll.

6.45 (6f 210yd) 1, **Tattie Bogle** (Marco Ghiani, 9-4); 2, Serenity Dream (2-1 fav); 3, Shaw Park (100-30). 6 ran. 1¼l, 37½l. C Johnston.

7.15 (5f 60yd) 1, **Diomed Spirit** (Saffie Osborne, 2-1 fav); 2, Bona Fortuna (5-2); 3, Mr Cool (2-1 fav). 6 ran. ¾l, 1½l. C Gordon.

Placepot: £27.30
Quadpot: £3.30

Wolverhampton

Going: Standard

4.42 (7f 36yd) 1, **Federal Envoy** (Donagh Murphy, 6-4 fav); 2, Mintana (40-1); 3, Renewable Dream (16-1). 9 ran. ¾l, hd. Charlie Clover.

5.12 (7f 36yd) 1, **Phalanx Nation** (Billy Loughnane, 6-4); 2, Speed Nation (14-1); 3, Iris Olivia (7-2). 9 ran. NR: Port Eleonora. 1l, hd. A Watson.

5.45 (1m 142yd) 1, **Norman Invasion** (Ashley Lewis, 5-2); 2, Hamda's Joy (16-1); 3, Showcasing Star (16-1). 6 ran. 1½l, ¾l. E Walker.

6.20 (1m 1f 105yd) 1, **Booziebrunch** (Cieren Fallon, 7-4 fav); 2, Lucky Luna (13-2); 3, Knowledge (2-1). 6 ran. 2l, 2¼l. S Woods.

6.55 (1m 1f 105yd) 1, **Melting Snow** (Billy Loughnane, 8-1); 2, Midnight Media (11-8 fav); 3, Pipily (14-1). 10 ran. hd, ½l. E A L Dunlop.

7.30 (5f 21yd) 1, **Macanudo** (Billy Loughnane, 7-2); 2, Henery Hawk (4-1); 3, The Fixer (4-1). 8 ran. NR: Sheik Yerbouti. nk, ½l. Ian Williams.

8.00 (6f 21yd) 1, **Rye** (R Ryan, 11-4 fav); 2, In The City (9-2); 3, Blackjack (13-2). 11 ran. hd, 1¼l. A W Carroll.

8.30 (1m 4f 51yd) 1, **Ottoman** (R Ryan, 11-1); 2, Luan (4-1); 3, Sevenkingsmustdie (5-2). 4 ran. NR: Dancingondiamonds. O Greenall & J Guerriero.

Placepot: £163.80 **Quadpot: £18.60**

The tragic paradoxes of Lomu's life

From identity tensions to the kidney disease he hid, film shows why superstar's rise was no fairytale. By **Alex Lowe**

COLORSPORT; ALAMY

Lomu scored four tries against England at the 1995 World Cup and met Queen Elizabeth with his All Blacks team-mates two years later, right

It is fitting that a powerful and raw documentary on the life of Jonah Lomu will be released to cinemas for one night only next Monday while the All Blacks are engaged in a thunderous Test series against the Springboks. It was at the 1995 World Cup in South Africa where Lomu established his reputation as the world's first rugby superstar and helped to shape its future.

In the battle that unfolded during that tournament between Rupert Murdoch and Kerry Packer for the future direction of rugby union as a professional sport, Lomu's was the prized signature. Packer's proposed global circuit offered him $1.5 million (now about £1.2 million) over three years. After Lomu's epic performance against England in the semi-finals, Murdoch said: "We have got to have that guy."

Sport had saved Lomu's life. His uncle had been killed with a machete in a shopping mall. Rugby, and Wesley College in particular, had given Lomu a path away from gang violence in South Auckland. By 1995, aged 20, he was the greatest athlete that rugby had produced and the biggest name in the game.

And yet, at the same time, Lomu was living with a severe kidney disease, which for two years he insisted on keeping secret from his coaches and would ultimately kill him at the age of 40. It was one of many tragic paradoxes of Lomu's life that are examined in this compelling film.

Lomu is directed by the Irish filmmaker Gavin Fitzgerald (*Conor McGregor: Notorious; Liam Gallagher: As It Was*) and the Tongan-New Zealander Vea Mafile'o (*For My Father's Kingdom*). Featuring unprecedented access to his family, the film captures the well-known story of Lomu's meteoric rise and playing for the All Blacks while on dialysis — but it is no fairytale.

The most compelling aspects of the film are when it delves into the complexity of the man; the identity tensions with which he struggled as a Tongan Kiwi, the broken relationships and the financial struggles that shaped his life. Even in death, that collision between Tongan traditions and European customs played out in a row over his funeral.

"As much as everyone knew Jonah as an All Black and a Kiwi, he was also known as a son of Tonga," his brother, John, says.

Rugby had never had a player like him. Sean Fitzpatrick, the former All Blacks captain, recalls first watching him play as a No 8 for New Zealand schoolboys and rampaging for four tries in 20 minutes against Australia. The All Blacks switched him to the wing and he was the star of the 1995 World Cup, scoring four tries against England in the semi-final. Lomu changed the game.

"To have a 6ft 5in winger, who weighed 20 stone, I think they could run 100 metres in ten seconds. We just hadn't seen that before," Fitzpatrick told The Times. "You give him a ten-yard start and he was unstoppable, as we saw throughout those games.

"He's the only global star we've ever had. No one has come close to him. Anyone. The Dan Carters of the world, Richie [McCaw], Jonny Wilkinson. Not even close. And there won't ever be another global star like him. He transcended the game.

"What he did in 1995. The Americans hadn't seen that before. The Italians hadn't seen that before. The Chinese hadn't seen that before. It was just, my God. And in terms of the marketing of it, the McDonald's, the Pizza Hut. That had never been done before.

"The way he encapsulated the All Black jersey was very special. In 1995 he was adamant about not being treated differently. And that's just the All Black way. He's one of our great All Blacks. He loved the jersey and was a good man, which unfortunately a lot of people didn't see.

"If he hadn't had rugby, he would have ended up like a lot of other kids. He embraced it. It changed his life. It wasn't easy when he went to boarding school. It took him a while to understand. He used to have a lot of fights.

"He was a man who embraced life. He loved life. He ended up being this global superstar. He would love other generations, other kids coming through to say, this is possible.

"Influencers are athletes today. Jude Bellingham has a much bigger reach than some movie star. That's what Nelson Mandela said. He said, 'You guys have an unbelievable voice'. That's a pretty powerful legacy that Jonah holds, as someone who's lived that himself. He changed hundreds and hundreds of kids' lives in New Zealand, because they wanted to be Jonah."

By 1999, Lomu was on dialysis, flying between Wellington and Auckland for treatment, and determined to make a second World Cup. "To see all that dialysis stuff that he was doing," Fitzpatrick said. "My God, it just makes you understand and respect him even more for what he was trying to achieve."

Lomu's secret kidney condition, nephrotic syndrome, almost cost him selection for the 1995 World Cup. He struggled with longer-distance and sprint endurance training at New Zealand's pre-tournament camp. The fatigue was so great that he would often want to return to bed after breakfast.

"Jonah just couldn't do it," Fitzpatrick said. "We were like, 'Come on Jonah, we're going to get you through this'. We knew what value he was going to bring to us. Laurie Mains [New Zealand's coach at the time] said, 'You're not going to the World Cup because you're not fit enough'."

An injury to Eric Rush opened the door for Lomu. Still he kept his condition a secret. Lomu would rather be dropped than seek sympathy. "No one else in the team knew about it," Dr John Mayhew says. "Jonah and I kept it quiet until 1997."

All the while he was handling constant demands for his time. John Hart took over as head coach in 1996 and initially had Lomu pegged as lazy.

"When I found out about the illness in 1997 and the impact that had on his condition to train, the doc having to get him up and get him to games — I didn't know any of that and I had a totally different understanding and deep appreciation of what he'd gone through," Hart says.

"He played in 1995 with that condition. He was just an unbelievable athlete. He was a rugby superstar playing in a body that had 70 per cent capacity. I just wonder, if he had been at 100 per cent. You'd never see another like him."

● *Lomu* is in cinemas for one night only Monday September 7. Book tickets here: lomu-doc.com

Teams risk fines or expulsion if they copy Erasmus line-up antics

Will Kelleher
Deputy Rugby Correspondent

Coaches who make last-minute changes to their line-ups for tactical reasons, as Rassie Erasmus did last week, risk fines at the World Cup or having their teams thrown out of the Champions Cup.

Erasmus, the South Africa head coach, altered his Springboks line-up twice after the usual deadline in the build-up to Saturday's second Test against New Zealand in Cape Town.

Rugby's major competitions have protocols to stop this sort of behaviour. In the Six Nations, the Nations Championship and at the World Cup, teams must be announced 48 hours before the match, and can be changed only in the event of an injury. The Times understands that if a coach was to do the same thing at next year's World Cup in Australia, World Rugby would have the power to fine them, because they would be in breach of the contract between World Rugby and the unions.

In the Investec Champions Cup, Challenge Cup and Gallagher Prem, there are other possible sanctions. European Professional Club Rugby (EPCR), which organises the Champions Cup and Challenge Cup, has some of the strictest regulations and the power to disqualify clubs from competitions if they break team announcement rules.

EPCR and Prem rules do not permit coaches to select multiple players in one position so they can confirm the starter later. Early last week, before the second Test of the Rugby's Greatest Rivalry series against the All Blacks, Erasmus named a 24-man squad, with Siya Kolisi and Paul de Villiers an "either-or" pick at No 6. Erasmus confirmed on Tuesday that Kolisi was fit to start.

On Friday, after the All Blacks team had been announced, Erasmus drafted in Sacha Feinberg-Mngomezulu for Handré Pollard at fly half, who the Springboks said had picked up a calf injury, and Cheslin Kolbe replaced Kurt-Lee Arendse. Kolbe appeared to be a tactical replacement. Erasmus said the wing was passed fit to play after training on Monday, but he was selected instead of Arendse on Friday.

Then, just before kick-off in Cape Town, Erasmus swapped his entire front row. Gerhard Steenekamp, Deon Fourie and Thomas du Toit were promoted to start ahead of Ox Nché, Malcolm Marx and Wilco Louw — Erasmus cited a change in the weather forecast as the reason. It is understood that the participation agreement between the sides for this series is looser than in other competitions, so Erasmus was able to take advantage of grey areas in the regulations.

EPCR's governance and regulations department has to approve any team changes after the announcement deadline, otherwise the 23-man squad publicly selected must take the field.

There are provisions in the regulations if a team is changed late. A disciplinary panel would be able to impose a fine, or a points deduction, and could even kick them out of the competition.

Sport Cricket

Bouchier seizes chance with century

England Women v Ireland Women

Leicester (first ODI of three; England won toss): England win by six wickets

Elizabeth Ammon

Maia Bouchier blasted a powerful century to lead England to their highest successful ODI run chase as they beat Ireland by six wickets.

The 27-year-old was dropped by England after their disastrous Ashes campaign in 2025 and was not part of England's T20 World Cup squad this year. She has, though, been in very good form for Hampshire this season, averaging 65.07 across all formats, and seized the opportunity given to her by the absence of England's usual ODI opener Amy Jones by securing her third international century.

Bouchier shared an opening partnership of 143 from only 19.4 overs with Sophia Dunkley, who hit 73 from 61 balls to break the back of the chase. The partnership was only broken by the spinner Cara Murray, Ireland's fifth-change bowler, taking a very sharp catch off her own bowling.

Jodi Grewcock, 21, in only her third international match lasted ten balls before becoming Murray's second victim, a lovely bit of flight and dip bowling England's No 3 through the gate.

Bouchier's fine innings of 104 off 95 balls came to an end when she holed out to long-on off Orla Kelly. Alice Capsey and the all-rounder Freya Kemp shared a partnership of 54 off 6.2 overs to put England within touching distance and they completed the chase with nearly 12 overs to spare. It beat England's previous highest successful ODI chase, which was 264 against Australia in 2023.

"I've been trying to trust the process and working on how to get these big scores," Bouchier said. "At the start of this summer, scoring a couple of centuries has really helped me and I feel confident in 50-over cricket. This was a good win for us, we played some great shots and took the pressure off in that chase."

Ireland are ranked tenth in ODIs and while they do not have the depth of most of those above them in the table are capable of producing high-quality cricketers. It was two of those — Amy Hunter and Gaby Lewis — in a second-wicket partnership of 136 followed by a 43-ball half-century by Rebecca Stokell that spearheaded Ireland to what looked like an imposing total of 281 for five.

England rested many of their senior players after a busy summer which has included a home T20 World Cup, three bilateral series and the first women's Test at Lord's, as well as the recently concluded Hundred. Those included the captain Nat Sciver-Brunt, opener Danni Wyatt-Hodge, wicketkeeper Jones and bowlers Sophie Ecclestone and Lauren Bell.

Capsey stood in as wicketkeeper despite not regularly taking the gloves in domestic cricket and she did an admirable job, particularly standing up to the stumps to the pace of Issy Wong. She took an excellent catch diving to her right to remove opener Alice Tector.

But Hunter and Lewis played excellently, with England's bowlers not at their best. The pair were effective against the host's three-pronged spin attack. They both reached half-centuries within a few balls of each other.

Wong struck again after returning to the attack in the 30th over to break the partnership, jagging one back through to gate to remove Lewis. It was a tough day for the teenage spinner Tilly Corteen-Coleman, going for 53 off seven overs in her fifth international match. She was taken for three boundaries in four balls by Orla Prendergast before she miscued to deep midwicket off the spin of Mady Villiers.

Dean was the most effective of the spinners and prised out Hunter by luring her down the pitch with one that slid past the inside edge and turned on to leg stump before Stokell blasted seven boundaries in her unbeaten 54 and then the stand-in skipper picked up her second wicket bowling Leah Paul. Wong should have had another wicket on the penultimate ball of the innings when she hit the base of Stokell's leg stump but while the bails moved, they weren't dislodged.

At the halfway stage, Ireland would have been delighted with their total, although it is not their highest against England, which came in 2024 when they scored 320 in Belfast. England had sent a second-string team to that game.

This was not by any means England's best display in the field, with some sloppy ground fielding and a lack of intensity in parts, and they will feel they could have restricted Ireland to a much lower total.

These may feel like low-key ODIs at the end of a busy summer but with senior players rested, there was a real chance to impress the head coach Charlotte Edwards, who will have been unimpressed with some of the fielding and wayward throws back to the wicketkeeper.

That aside, it was a clinical chase which got the job done for England, with the next two matches coming in quick succession. They move on to play at Derby tomorrow and finish the series and England's international summer at Worcester on Sunday.

Bouchier scored her third international ton

Scoreboard

Ireland	(balls)	
Alice Tector c Capsey b Wong	11	(14)
*Gaby Lewis b Wong	69	(89)
†Amy Hunter b Dean	62	(90)
Orla Prendergast c Bouchier b Villiers	19	(17)
Rebecca Stokell not out	54	(48)
Leah Paul b Dean	29	(39)
Louise Little not out	4	(4)
Extras (b 4, lb 8, nb 1, w 20)	33	
Total (5 wkts, 50 overs)	**281**	

Cara Murray, Kia McCartney, Jane Maguire and Arlene Kelly did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-13, 2-149, 3-172, 4-184, 5-268.

Bowling Wong 10-0-57-2; Filer 10-0-37-0; Corteen-Coleman 7-0-53-0; Gibson 5-0-32-0; Dean 10-0-44-2; Villiers 8-0-46-1.

England	(balls)	
Maia Bouchier c Prendergast b Kelly	104	(95)
Sophia Dunkley c and b Murray	73	(61)
Jodi Grewcock b Murray	9	(10)
†Alice Capsey not out	41	(40)
Freya Kemp c Tector b Murray	36	(22)
Dani Gibson not out	1	(1)
Extras (b 6, lb 3, w 10)	19	
Total (4 wkts, 38.1 overs)	**283**	

*Charlie Dean, Mady Villiers, Issy Wong, Lauren Filer and Tilly Corteen-Coleman did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-143, 2-173, 3-223, 4-277.

Bowling Prendergast 6-2-35-0; Maguire 6-0-54-0; Kelly 6-0-38-1; McCartney 6-0-47-0; Murray 9-0-58-3; Little 5.1-0-42-0.

England lead the three-match series 1-0

Details: Second ODI: Thursday (Derby). **Third: Sunday** (Worcester).

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Afridi 'shocked' by chaos as Pakistan selector also quits

Elizabeth Ammon

Pakistan's crisis deepened yesterday morning when selector Misbah-ul-Haq offered his resignation — 24 hours after the head coach and assistant coach were sacked and seven of their squad were sent home.

The team have suffered two heavy back-to-back defeats to surrender the Test series to England with a game to spare. The third Test starts a week today at Edgbaston. The Pakistan Cricket Board is reportedly yet to accept Misbah's resignation.

Sarfaraz Ahmed, the head coach, and his assistant, Umar Gul, have been "released" and will be replaced by Pakistan's white-ball coach, Mike Hesson, and assistant coach, Ashley Noffke.

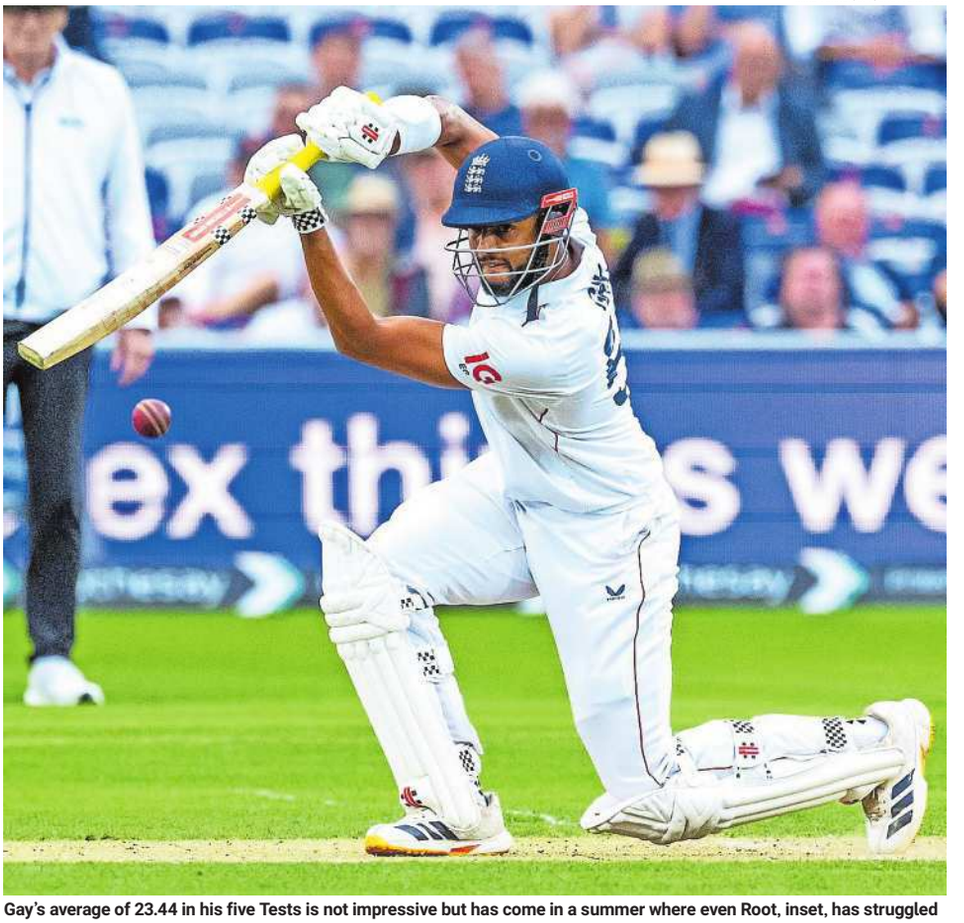
The players sent home include the wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan, bowlers Ali Usman and Khurram Shahzad, and Salman Ali Agha, who captained Pakistan in the first Test in the absence of Babar Azam. Imam-ul-Haq, who did not bat in the second Test because of a calf injury, has also been sent home, along with Aamir Jamal and Awais Jafar. Seven replacements have been called into their squad, including four uncapped players. Among those called up are the batsmen Saim Ayub and Abdullah Fazal, who have played eight and two Tests respectively, while the left-arm spinner Arafat Minhas has played three ODIs and four T20Is.

The former Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi condemned the mid-series squad shake-up as "the most shocking decision ever by a selection committee".

Afridi wrote on X: "Not sure what is the logic or reasoning behind this decision! Even the replacements make no sense — T20 players have been included for a Test match in England? Why has the coach been axed after five Tests? This is the most shocking decision ever by a selection committee which includes so many experienced selectors."

Gay's poor Test average does not tell whole story

Steve James



MIKE TURNER/SPP/SHUTTERSTOCK

Gay's average of 23.44 in his five Tests is not impressive but has come in a summer where even Root, inset, has struggled

"Play that if you can," my colleague Mike Atherton said with a knowing chuckle on the Sky Sports commentary. The ball from Pakistan's Mohammad Abbas from round the wicket had been angled into the left-handed Emilio Gay and then darted away viciously late past the outside edge. It was unplayable, so much so that Gay could be heard saying "Oh my God!" on the stump microphone as the ball passed. And, sadly, that was only the start.

Three balls later in his second innings at Lord's, Gay received a delivery that was even more unplayable, a grubber from Abbas that thudded into his shins to dismiss him leg-before. It was the sort of delivery every batter dreads.

Misfortune does not come dressed any more obviously or garishly than that Abbas ball, and, added to being caught down the leg side in the first innings (even if I think that was partly down to Gay's trigger movement in which he crosses off with his front foot), it does cloud the picture when assessing Gay's worth and future as a Test-match opener.

The bare numbers are that he has played five Tests, made two half-centuries and averages 23.44. They are not impressive figures. But then immediately you have to consider that this is a Test summer when Joe Root has averaged 29.44, with only two fifties. Gay's opening partner, Ben Duckett, is the only England player to have made a century, but that is his only score of more than 50 and he averages 31. Jacob Bethell averaged 17.16 in his three Tests before injury.

Both of Gay's fifties — against New Zealand — came in innings in which he top-scored, and in the first of those he scored 25.2 per cent of England's total in the innings, which is interesting because, when selecting their teams, Australia are now considering the "carry percentage" (how often a player scores more than 25 per cent of the team's total in an innings) in trying to make sense of the trend towards shorter Test matches and falling batting averages.

All this more nuanced analysis is, of course, nothing new because when Ed Smith was national selector England were talking about the use of "weighted averages" instead of conventional averages to take into account the context of matches and the standard of opposition.

It all makes sense. As Australia's head coach Andrew McDonald told ESPN Cricinfo of the present Australian thinking, which also measures a player's median percentage (their typical innings share, with half their innings being higher and half lower): "Some of our players that aren't averaging what the outside think they should, if you get some context in that, they're still contributing to the team in a way that we're winning games of cricket."

And England have their own methods of analysis, using a company called Prospect in these times when county cricket is probably further removed from the Test game than ever and the raw numbers demand deeper investigation. It is all fascinating stuff, but just as technique is not everything for a batter, then the same applies to the data. And Gay's example is intriguing, with a chance in the final Test against Pakistan next week to put to bed all arguments. If he scores a century, he will be on the plane to South Africa this winter. It is as simple as that.

But cricket is rarely that straightforward, and the likelihood is that the selectors will face a tricky decision about the 26-year-old opener. First to consider will be whether six Tests is sufficient to make a definitive judgment.

I wrote a piece this summer about how Adam Lyth (seven Tests at 20.38) wishes he had played 15 more Tests, and I was struck by the take of Sky Sports' statistician Benedict Bermange on it, telling me: "Studies in baseball have indicated it takes roughly 130 to 160 games [or about 500 to 600 plate appearances] to reliably evaluate a player's true talent level. In cricket some calculations show that if you want a player's average to be 50 per cent talent and 50 per cent luck, you need about 20 Tests."

The next consideration must be whether there is someone better to bring in. I'm not sure there is. Previously I have advocated for Somerset's James Rew to open, but he is clearly not interested, and the evidence of his Test debut as a wicketkeeper and No 6 was not promising. Durham's Ben McKinney will open for England one day, but he is not ready. Glamorgan's Asa Tribe has endured a classic sophomore slump, while returning to any of the previously tried players such as Dom Sibley and Haseeb Hameed does not seem sensible or desirable.

Jordan Cox, for all his attractions, is not a Test opener, a view confirmed the longer he batted in the first innings at Lord's, because the more crooked his bat path then appeared to become.

There is one player in county cricket, though, who interests me and that is Essex's Charlie Allison. He bats alongside Cox in the middle order there and has had a decent season, but to me he looks a player with the game to open. He is well organised, strong off his legs and leaves well. The possibilities are vast. In the meantime, Zak Crawley anyone? In a couple of 80s for Kent, he has shown again how easy it is to be lured into the web of his elegant stroke-making.

The final question for the England selectors is, how good could Gay become? His temperament appears sound, his body language assured. He has survived some torrid passages of play and has been content to play the waiting game like a more old-fashioned opener. And there have been times when his cover driving has been majestic. But then there is that trigger movement that closes him off, a position that can only be rectified by over-correction and the inevitable squaring up. Balls on a good or shortish length from over the wicket and moving away from him — like the one from Mohammad Ali at Headingley — will always trouble him.

And what about the short stuff, of which there doubtless will be plenty in South Africa? There has not been much of that this summer, but Gay was dismissed by a short one from New Zealand's Will O'Rourke upon which he had worryingly turned his head. I have seen him pull well in county cricket but I have also seen him flap unconvincingly at balls above chest height.

The jury is undoubtedly out but at least he will have matters in his own hands in Birmingham, unplayable balls notwithstanding.

A summer for bowlers

No England Test batsman with five or more innings this summer has averaged above 40

	Runs	High score	Average
Harry Brook (Innings: 9)	357	91	39.66
Jordan Cox (5)	191	73	38.20
Ben Duckett (9)	279	113	31.00
Joe Root (9)	265	77	29.44
Jamie Smith (7)	194	61	27.71
Emilio Gay (9)	211	57	23.44
Jacob Bethell (6)	103	74	17.16

Source: ESPN StatsGuru

Stokes to earn £265k in first franchise deal since England exit

CONTINUED FROM BACK

season, but did not take part after picking up an injury towards the end of the Test series in New Zealand in late 2024.

Two of Australia's most prominent Test cricketers, Alex Carey and Travis Head, both of whom played major parts in Stokes's England team being heavily beaten in last winter's Ashes series, are members of the Strikers squad, although only Carey played for the side last season. The Strikers are coached by Tim Paine, who as Australia captain was on the wrong end of Stokes's celebrated match-winning century at Headingley in 2019. The England white-ball specialist Luke Wood played for the Strikers last year on what was then the top pay band of $420,000 (about £220,000).

It will be Stokes's second season in the Big Bash after he played four games for Melbourne Renegades in 2014-15. Several other teams were reportedly interested in signing him, with Sydney Sixers at one point rated as favourites.

"I'm really excited to be joining the Adelaide Strikers for BBL16," Stokes said. "I've always enjoyed playing in Australia, and when the opportunity came up to join the Strikers it was one I couldn't pass up. Adelaide Oval is an incredible place to play cricket, the Big Bash is a fantastic competition and the Strikers have an exciting group, so I'm looking forward to getting stuck in and contributing to a successful season."

Stokes last played in the Big Bash back in 2014-15

Paine said: "Ben is one of the greatest all-rounders the game has seen, a proven match-winner and a competitor who thrives under pressure."

Stokes's decision to play in Australia after stopping with England has echoes of Ian Botham, another great England all-rounder, signing to play three seasons with Queensland after he gave up regular Test tours in 1987, although his time there was cut short after one season following various allegations of indiscipline.

Sport

Ski Sunday axed after 48 years amid BBC cuts

Martyn Ziegler Chief Sports Reporter

BBC Sport is to axe *Ski Sunday* after nearly 50 years as a result of financial cuts, the broadcaster has announced.

The programme, which covered downhill and slalom skiing as well as snowboard races and events, was launched in 1978 and its signature theme tune was once a feature of Sunday early-evening television.

Ski Sunday was presented for many years by David Vine, and later by the former skier Graham Bell. The most recent presenting partnership was the former snowboarder Ed Leigh and ex-Olympic skier Chemmy Alcott.

Alcott said she was "devastated" by the announcement. "For 39 years, *Ski Sunday* has been part of my life," she posted on Instagram. "It started my dream as a five-year-old. As a family, we'd huddle around the fire every Sunday, waiting for that iconic music. It shaped every turn, every decision and every day that followed.

"As a little girl I had two dreams: to win at the Olympics and to present *Ski Sunday*. I fought with everything for the first and didn't quite get there. But I achieved the second. I desperately wanted us to reach that 50th year. I wanted another generation of kids to hear that music and think: maybe I could do that. Our winter sports community will miss *Ski Sunday* enormously."

Michael Payne, the former marketing director of the International Olympic Committee and a former member of the British Freestyle Ski Team, described the BBC's decision as "a great pity".

He told The Times: "It was a unique programme that generations grew up on and was a very innovative show. British skiing has come a very long way in the last 50 years and *Ski Sunday* would have played a part in that."

The BBC said "changing audience behaviours and the tough financial decisions needed to meet savings" had led to the decision to axe the programme.

It is the latest in a series of decisions by the BBC to drop events that it has covered for decades, including the Commonwealth Games, the Boat Race and the Rugby League World Cup. The Saturday lunchtime show *Football Focus* was also cut at the end of last season.

Philip Bernie, the head of BBC Sport Events, said: "*Ski Sunday* has been a truly iconic programme and a much loved part of BBC Sport's output for many years. Generations of viewers have enjoyed its coverage of the best in winter sports.

"We are enormously proud of the role it has played in bringing these moments to audiences across the UK, and extremely grateful to the brilliant people who have delivered them, not least the current outstanding team.

"These decisions are never easy, but as audience viewing habits evolve and we work to deliver value for licence fee payers, we have to make tough choices. We remain committed to bringing audiences the very best of winter sport, above all at the Winter Olympics, across BBC Sport's platforms."

Alcott, the former Olympic skier, said she was "devastated" by the decision

JOHN ANGELILLO/UPI/SHUTTERSTOCK

Osaka continued to look like Iverson, below, even after her grand arrival on to the court in New York, left

Osaka pays homage to NBA 'inspiration' Iverson

Naomi Osaka paid tribute to former NBA star and fashion "trailblazer" Allen Iverson with her walk-on outfit before her first-round victory over Anastasia Zakharova at the US Open (Tom Kershaw writes).

The four-times grand-slam champion has unveiled collaborations between Nike and high-end fashion designers at each of the grand-slam tournaments this year, and she continued the theme by arriving for her match on Arthur Ashe Stadium, which she won 7-6 (8-6), 7-6 (7-3), in a grey hooded robe and a long white skirt that featured news clippings about her. The 28-year-old then removed the hood, revealing her hair had been braided into cornrows under a headband, recreating Iverson's iconic look when he played for the Philadelphia 76ers.

Osaka also wore a compression sleeve on her arm like Iverson. The 51-year-old is considered one of the all-time great NBA players.

"Obviously the inspiration is Allen Iverson," she said. "He's a trailblazer. He's someone that was able to merge culture and sport, and he's very famous for that. Also, I just really appreciate his style. That's what I tried to embody.

"I had a lot of fun with that design process. It fits New York really well. I'm just excited to continue."

Iverson responded to the tribue on Instagram, writing: "Wow, what a honor!! BIG FAN can't wait to meet you."

Defending champion Aryna Sabalenka, who defeated Colombia's Camila Osorio, had worn an orange dress in homage to the New York Knicks.

Results

Football

Sky Bet Championship

Birmingham (0) **1** **Southampton** (1) **1**
Priske 55 — Schlotterbeck 45+3

Lincoln City (0) **0** **Blackburn** (0) **0**
10,267
Sent off: Atcheson (Blackburn) 69

Portsmouth (0) **0** **Derby** (1) **2**
20,282 — Szmodics 16, Salvesen 62

Preston (0) **1** **Bristol City** (1) **3**
Wiley 51
13,028 — Twine 4, Eissat 79, Ballard 86

Sheffield Utd (1) **3** **Bolton** (1) **2**
Tanganga 4, Bamford 68, Donovan 90+3 — Simons 1, Dalby 67, 25,714

Stoke (1) **1** **Norwich** (0) **0**
Galbraith 13

Swansea (2) **2** **Watford** (0) **0**
Eom 8, Idah 29
16,195

West Ham (2) **4** **Wolves** (1) **2**
Mukasa 33, 53, Bowen 42 (pen), Mavropanos 64 — Munetsi 44, Mavropanos 69 (og)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Swansea	4	3	1	0	7	1	6	10
Charlton	3	3	0	0	5	2	3	9
Wolves	4	2	1	1	11	8	3	7
QPR	3	2	1	0	5	2	3	7
Bristol City	4	2	1	1	7	6	1	7
Middlesbro	3	2	0	1	6	4	2	6
Millwall	3	2	0	1	6	5	1	6
West Brom	3	2	0	1	6	5	1	6
Birmingham	4	1	3	0	5	4	1	6
Sheffield Utd	4	1	3	0	5	4	1	6
West Ham	4	1	2	1	8	7	1	5
Blackburn	4	1	2	1	5	5	0	5
Watford	4	1	2	1	4	5	-1	5
Bolton	4	1	1	2	4	5	-1	4
Derby	4	1	1	2	5	7	-2	4
Lincoln City	4	1	1	2	3	5	-2	4
Southampton*	4	2	1	1	10	5	5	3
Cardiff	3	0	3	0	5	5	0	3
Norwich	4	1	0	3	5	7	-2	3
Portsmouth	4	1	0	3	5	8	-3	3
Stoke	4	1	0	3	4	9	-5	3
Wrexham	3	0	2	1	3	4	-1	2
Burnley	3	0	1	2	4	9	-5	1
Preston	4	0	0	4	3	9	-6	0

*deducted 4pts for breaching league rules

League One

Bradford City (0) **1** **Cambridge U** (0) **2**
Pointon 76 — KaiKai 58, Knight 88

Bromley (0) **0** **Leyton Orient** (1) **5**
5,022 — Kabia 36, 66, Akhamrich 46, 51, Dobra 90+1

Doncaster (1) **1** **Notts County** (0) **1**
Hutchinson 36 — Cooper 64

Huddersfield (0) **3** **Oxford Utd** (0) **1**
Radulovic 56, Taylor 74, 77 — O'Donkor 70

Leicester (2) **2** **Plymouth** (0) **0**
Alves 45+3, Howell 45+5

Peterborough (0) **0** **Stevenage** (0) **0**
6,565

Wycombe (1) **1** **Sheffield Wed** (2) **2**
Woodrow 6 — Barry 11, Lowe 45+8 (pen)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Huddersfield	4	3	1	0	9	3	6	10
Sheffield Wed	4	3	0	1	11	5	6	9
Blackpool	3	2	1	0	7	2	5	7
Cambridge U	4	2	1	1	7	6	1	7
Stockport	3	2	0	1	9	4	5	6
Leyton Orient	4	2	0	2	9	5	4	6
Mansfield	3	2	0	1	8	5	3	6
Notts County	4	1	3	0	6	5	1	6
Bradford	4	2	0	2	4	4	0	6
Leicester	4	1	2	1	4	3	1	5
Barnsley	3	1	1	1	3	2	1	4
Burton	3	1	1	1	4	4	0	4
Oxford Utd	3	1	1	1	5	6	-1	4
Luton	3	1	1	1	8	10	-2	4
Plymouth	4	1	1	2	4	6	-2	4
AFC Wimbledon	3	1	1	1	1	3	-2	4
Peterborough	4	1	1	2	2	7	-5	4
Bromley	4	1	1	2	4	13	-9	4
MK Dons	3	0	3	0	3	3	0	3
Doncaster	4	0	3	1	4	5	-1	3
Stevenage	4	0	3	1	4	5	-1	3
Wycombe	4	0	2	2	4	9	-5	2
Reading	2	0	1	1	3	4	-1	1
Wigan	3	0	0	3	2	6	-4	0

League Two

Accrington (1) **2** **Grimsby** (2) **2**
Woods 45+7 (pen), Walton 60 — Anderson 6 (og), Cook 38

Bristol Rovers (1) **2** **Colchester** (0) **0**
James 27, Harrison 90+3
7,663

Cheltenham (1) **3** **York** (1) **2**
Evans 17, 65, McCann 86
3,928 — Pearce 12, Malcolm 73

Chesterfield (1) **1** **Gillingham** (0) **1**
Koroma 22
6,103 — Hale 58

Crewe (0) **2** **Walsall** (1) **2**
March 50, Hutchinson 90+2
4,918 — Pressley 42 (pen), 57

Exeter (0) **1** **Barnet** (0) **1**
Cole 67
4,826 — Kanu 60

Fleetwood (0) **1** **Oldham** (1) **1**
Coughlan 88
3,085 — Drummond 45

Northampton (1) **1** **Crawley** (0) **1**
Opoku 38
4,890 — Pereira 67
Sent off: Evans (Northampton) 55

Rochdale (2) **3** **Shrewsbury** (0) **0**
Adeeko 33, Hannant 43, Smith 80
3,241

Salford (0) **2** **Newport Co** (0) **1**
Allen 83, N'Mai 90 — Biggins 71
2,151

Swindon (1) **3** **Port Vale** (1) **1**
Drinan 13, Middlemas 71, Millard 90+4 — Lynch 2
6,609

Tranmere (1) **2** **Rotherham** (0) **2**
Okoro 16, Ince 87
6,137 — Nemane 84, Bradshaw 90+6 (pen)
Sent off: Faulkner (Tranmere) 90+4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Bristol Rovers	4	3	0	1	11	6	5	9
Barnet	4	2	2	0	9	5	4	8
Walsall	4	2	2	0	8	4	4	8
Crewe	4	2	2	0	4	2	2	8
Oldham	4	2	1	1	7	3	4	7
Cheltenham	4	2	1	1	8	7	1	7
York	4	2	1	1	8	7	1	7
Colchester	4	2	1	1	5	5	0	7
Swindon	4	2	1	1	5	5	0	7
Tranmere	4	1	3	0	7	5	2	6
Grimsby	4	1	3	0	5	4	1	6
Fleetwood	4	1	3	0	4	3	1	6
Rotherham	4	1	2	1	6	6	0	5
Newport County	4	1	1	2	9	9	0	4
Exeter	4	1	1	2	4	4	0	4
Chesterfield	4	1	1	2	3	4	-1	4
Crawley	4	1	1	2	3	5	-2	4
Northampton	4	0	3	1	2	3	-1	3
Rochdale	4	1	0	3	4	6	-2	3
Salford	4	1	0	3	3	6	-3	3
Gillingham	4	0	3	1	2	5	-3	3
Shrewsbury	4	1	0	3	2	8	-6	3
Accrington	4	0	2	2	6	9	-3	2
Port Vale	4	0	2	2	2	6	-4	2

Enterprise National League Halifax 1 Hartlepool 0.

Scottish Challenge Cup Stranraer 3 Celtic U21 4.

Cycling

Vuelta a España

Leading positions: Stage 10 (Alcaraz to Elche de la Sierra, 184.5km): 1, B Tronchon (Fr, Groupama-FDJ United) 4hr 7min 41sec; 2, M Cort (Den, Uno-X Mobility); 3, T Nys (Bel, Lidl-Trek); 4, W van Aert (Bel, Visma Lease a Bike); 5, A Romele (It, XDS Astana); 6, X Azparren (Sp, Pinarello-Q36.5 Pro Cycling); 7, F Fisher-Black (NZ, Red Bull-BORA-hansgrohe); 8, O Aular (Ven, Movistar); 9, J Labrosse (Fr, Decathlon CMA CGM); 10, H Hofstetter (Fra, NSN Cycling) all same time. **Overall** 1, M Enric (Sp, Movistar) 32:41:44; 2, P Roglic (Slove, Red Bull-BORA-hansgrohe) at 1min 18sec behind; 3, F Gall (Austria, Decathlon CMA CGM) 1:39; 4, O Onley (GB, Netcompany INEOS Cycling) 2:20; 5, R Carapaz (Ec, EF Education-EasyPost) 3:26; 6, M Skjelmose (Den, Lidl-Trek) 3:55; 7, S Kuss (US, Visma Lease a Bike) 4:09; 8, H Tejada (Col, XDS Astana) 4:39; 9, G Muhlberger (Austria, Decathlon CMA CGM) 7:33; 10, J Omrzel (Slove, Bahrain Victorious) 8:05.

Snooker

Unibet British Open

Centaur, Cheltenham: First round (England unless stated): J Jones (Wales) bt A McGill (Scot) 4-0; G He (China) bt C Gong (China) 4-2; J Page (Wales) bt J Robertson 4-1; M Joyce bt J Brown (N Ire) 4-0; B Chang (China) bt C Nasa (Thai) 4-1; D Jones (Wales) bt Y Liu (China) 4-2; H Lyu (China) bt G Xiao (China) 4-2; A Zizins (Lat) bt J Thomond 4-2; L Highfield bt M El Hareedy (Egy) 4-2; K Wilson bt Y Wu (China) 4-1; A Zhang (China) bt C Wakelin 4-3; J Lisowski bt M Mann 4-3; I Chadha (India) bt S Hallworth 4-2; E Slessor bt J Clarke (Wales) 4-1; J Ding (China) bt S O'Sullivan 4-0.

Tennis

US Open

Flushing Meadows: First round (seeds in brackets; British players in blue): **Men** (3) F Auger-Aliassime (Can) bt R Hijikata (Aus) 7-5, 4-6, 6-3, 7-5; A Popyrin (Aus) bt G Dimitrov (Bul) 3-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-4; (8) B Shelton (US) bt T Griekspoor (Neth) 1-6, 6-1, 7-6 (7-3), 6-2; (17) J Mensik (Cz) bt S Mochizuki (Japan) 6-1, 6-4, 7-5; (11) F Tiafoe (US) bt M Damm Jr (US) 6-4, 4-6, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4; (5) F Cobolli (It) bt F Comesana (Arg) 3-6, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4; (9) T Fritz (US) bt D Blanch (US) 6-3, 6-2, 6-4; M Bellucci (It) bt Z Piros (Hun) 6-4, 6-2, 6-0. **Women** (8) I Swiatek (Pol) bt Xiyu Wang (China) 6-2, 6-3; (13) N Osaka (Japan) bt A Zakharova (Russ) 7-6 (8-6) 7-6 (7-3); (22) M Keys (US) bt A Korneeva (Russ) 7-5, 6-4; E Lys (Ger) bt G Knutson (Cz) 6-3, 6-3; (2) E Rybakina (Kaz) bt T Frodin (US) 6-3, 6-2; Y Starodubtseva (Ukr) bt E Seidel (Ger) 6-2, 6-2; A Bondar (Hun) bt L Havlickova (Cz) 6-3, 6-3.

Fixtures

Football

Kick-off 7.45 unless stated

Sky Bet Championship Burnley v Middlesbrough (8.0); Millwall v Wrexham; QPR v Cardiff; West Bromwich v Charlton. **League One** Barnsley v Blackpool; Burton Albion v AFC Wimbledon; Luton v Stockport; Reading v Mansfield (8.0); Wigan v MK Dons. **Vertu EFL Trophy** Doncaster v Liverpool U21 (7.0).

William Hill Premiership Celtic v Aberdeen; Dundee v St Johnstone; Falkirk v Rangers (8.0); Kilmarnock v St Mirren; Motherwell v Dundee Utd.

Cricket

Rothesay County Championship: First day of four (11.0; 96 overs minimum): **Division One: Chelmsford** Essex v Sussex. **Utilita Bowl** Hampshire v Warwickshire. **Trent Bridge** Nottinghamshire v Leicestershire. **Taunton** Somerset v Glamorgan. **The Oval** Surrey v Yorkshire. **Division Two: Bristol** Gloucestershire v Derbyshire. **Canterbury** Kent v Worcestershire. **Northwood** Middlesex v Lancashire. **Northampton** Northamptonshire v Durham.

Snooker

Centaur, Cheltenham Unibet British Open.

Staveley in the stands for a Divine display

West Ham United *Mukasa 33, 53, Bowen 42 (pen), Mavropanos 64*	**4**
Wolves *Munetsi 44, Mavropanos (og) 69*	**2**

Sky Bet Championship
Jon West

West Ham's Championship campaign was belatedly given lift-off by Divine Mukasa, whose two goals prevented Wolverhampton Wanderers from going top.

The pressure was on Nuno Espírito Santo and his players after two draws and a defeat from their first three league games. Mukasa, the on-loan Manchester City midfielder, ensured that that was lifted. Jarrod Bowen and Konstantinos Mavropanos were also on target for the hosts, the latter contributing a late own goal for Wolves, who had earlier reduced their deficit to 2-1 through Marshall Munetsi.

Wolves, previously unbeaten under new manager César Peixoto, were also relegated from the Premier League last term but where these two sides will end up in May is anyone's guess given that neither can defend. The sight of Amanda Staveley in the directors' box suggested that West Ham's ownership battle could soon become clearer, however.

Her consortium has agreed a £150 million deal to buy the 25.1 per cent stake from the family of the late David Gold, who invited her to the match. She led the takeover of Newcastle United for Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund and wants to do something similar in east London. Her ambitions could be thwarted by co-chair Daniel Kretinsky, who has a 27 per cent stake and wants to take control but not secure ownership, which would occur should his holding exceed 50 per cent.

West Ham were woeful for the first half hour and fortunate not to be behind, especially as Raúl Jiménez and Mateus Mané both hit their crossbar. Divine intervention, of sorts, arrived in the 33rd minute when Mukasa unleashed a rising drive from more than 20 yards. That, too, hit the crossbar, going in off the underside.

Wolves imploded, with André's desperate lunge toppling Joel Piroe to present West Ham with a penalty.

ELLI BIRCH/IPS/SHUTTERSTOCK

Mukasa struck twice to guide West Ham to their first league win of the season

Bowen had allowed Taty Castellanos to take one in West Ham's previous home game and the Argentinian missed the chance of a late equaliser. Bowen slotted in this one, sending goalkeeper José Sá the wrong way in the 42nd minute.

Wolves pulled one back immediately before half-time when a ricochet in midfield allowed Munetsi — who had earlier blocked Max Kilman's shot on the line at the other end — to turn Mavropanos and place a shot beyond goalkeeper Mads Hermansen. Mukasa made it 3-1 in the 53rd minute with a little help from Bowen, whose pass located him in space on the right of the area, and Wolves defender Nasser Djiga, whose boot deflected the teenager's shot over Sá and in.

West Ham made it 4-1 in the 65th minute through Mavropanos's goal from a corner. He saw his close-range header deflected on to the crossbar but reacted to lash in the rebound, also off the crossbar. Wolves pulled a goal back in the 69th minute when Mavropanos, sliding in to stop Jackson Tchatchoua setting up Jordan James, diverted the ball into his own net.

West Ham (4-4-2): M Hermansen — K Walker-Peters (J Veltman 56), K Mavropanos, M Kilman, O Scarles — J Bowen, A Engels, D Mukasa (K Lamadrid 69), M Solomon (E Austbo 79) — Pablo (M Kante 79), J Piroe (T Castellanos 56).
Booked Mukasa
Wolverhampton Wanderers (4-2-3-1): J Sá — J Tchatchoua, N Djiga, Toti, H Bueno — Andre, M Munetsi (T Doyle 66) — R Gomes (A Armstrong 60), F Lopez, M Mane (T Chirewa 80) — R Jiménez (J James 65).
Referee L Smith

McTominay to have heart operation

Mark Palmer

Scott McTominay will undergo a heart procedure after the diagnosis of a "mild benign arrhythmia" and is out of Scotland's four matches in the forthcoming international break.

The 29-year-old left the field after 56 minutes on Sunday while playing for his club side Napoli in their 2-1 Serie A defeat at home to Como.

McTominay will have an operation "in the coming days", with Napoli saying in a statement they hope to have the former Manchester United midfielder available again after the international break.

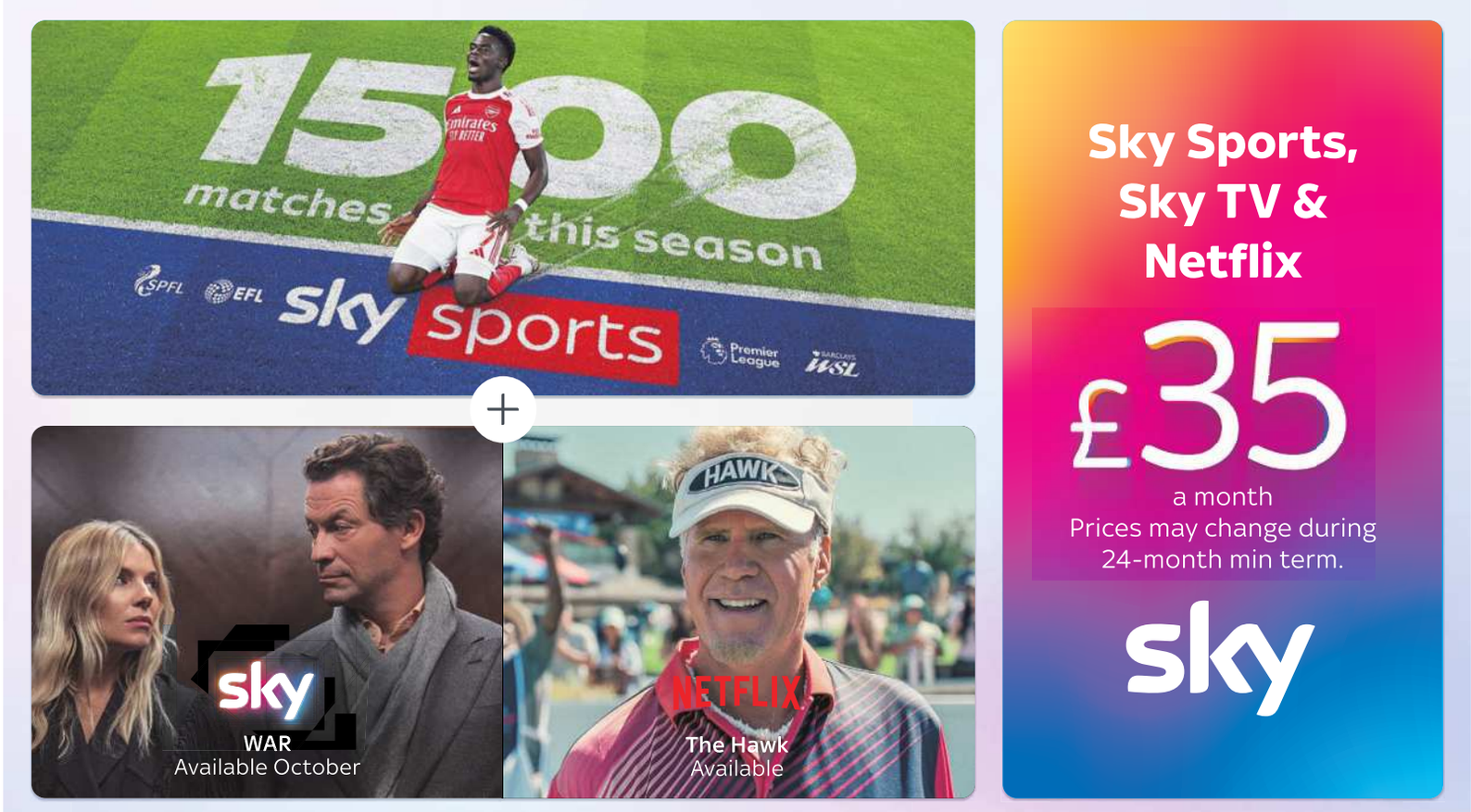
Scotland face Slovenia (twice), Switzerland and North Macedonia in the Nations League between September 26 and October 6 in Sébastien Pocognoli's first four games as head coach since replacing Steve Clarke.

McTominay posted on social media: "See you soon Napoli. I won't take long."

He is due to have a cardiac arrhythmia ablation, a procedure which uses heat or cold energy to create tiny scars in the heart. The scars block faulty heart signals and restore a typical heartbeat.

Recovery "usually only takes a few days to a week", although this guidance refers to members of the general public rather than professional athletes.

Under Serie A regulations, players are subject to regular heart screening.



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PATRICK SMITH/FIFA/GETTY IMAGES

Messi helped Argentina reach the World Cup final this summer, having lifted the famous trophy, in 2022, below

Lessons from humble maestro who showed game at its purest

Paul Hirst says global emotional outpouring that Lionel Messi's international retirement has sparked is justified

They could feel the midday sun on the back of their necks, but the 200 members of the Argentina press pack did not budge from their positions for the best part of an hour as they waited patiently behind a barrier at the squad's training ground in Kansas City for a glimpse of Lionel Messi.

They all had their eyes or camera lenses trained on the dressing-room door, behind which Messi and his teammates were putting on their boots ahead of their final practice session before their opening World Cup fixture against Algeria. When the door finally opened, they stopped chatting among themselves and went into broadcast mode, some of them speaking live on TV, others on radio, others live-streaming.

"There he is, Leo Messi, stepping out on to the field with Rodrigo De Paul, Lisandro Martínez and Cuti Romero," yelled one radio reporter as the four players chatted 20 yards away and sauntered on to the lush practice field.

The Argentina Football Association (AFA) only allowed the media in for the first 15 minutes of training, as is common at World Cups. Little can be gleaned from these training sessions as the first 15 minutes essentially cover the warm-up only. But the Argentinian pack excitedly followed each and every movement made by Messi. "He's talking to [Lionel] Scaloni … now he's having a joke with De Paul."

I've never seen so much attention given to one person. Argentina, I discovered, is not just obsessed with Messi, but dearly in love with him.

Argentina's economy is struggling and yet here you had 200-plus of the country's reporters, photographers and TV cameramen in the United States to watch Messi's every move.

Messi posted on social media later that week, after cutting an emotional figure following his hat-trick against Algeria, that his father, Jorge, was seriously ill. He would die three weeks after the World Cup final.

When they arrived in the US to cover the tournament, many of the Argentinian reporters already knew about Jorge's illness — and had done so for some time — but did not report it out of respect for Messi and his family.

That is how much Messi is loved and respected in his country. That is why Argentina was a country in mourning on Monday when Messi announced he would be retiring from the international game aged 39.

The ESPN reporter Morena Beltrán broke down in tears during a live broadcast about Messi's retirement, and when the TV news channel Agarrá La Pala stopped a woman in the streets in Buenos Aires to ask her about Messi's international retirement, she could not fight back the tears either. "This hurts my soul," she said. "Thank you, Leo. We love you."

I contacted a number of Argentinian friends and the overriding emotion they were feeling was shock. They knew deep down, after the loss to Spain, that Messi would not play for Argentina again, but still, they were finding it hard to process the information.

I had seen Messi play for Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain, and I also covered Argentina's loss to Saudi Arabia in the 2022 World Cup, but this summer was the first time I truly began to appreciate his genius, primarily because I covered the team from start to finish, even taking in a warm-up friendly against Iceland in Alabama.

Messi scored eight goals, but spent most of his time on the pitch walking. He conserved his energy for the right moments, but there was still that little burst of pace if he needed it to get into the box, and he was the driving force behind late wins over Cape Verde, Egypt and England.

After the Egypt match in the round of 16, Scaloni was asked what had made him move Messi over to the right wing. The Argentina head coach bashfully replied that he had no input whatsoever. "It was Leo's idea," he said. When England were 1-0 up a week later, Messi pulled the same trick, drifting out to the right, and we all know what happened next.

What struck me about Messi so much during the World Cup was his global appeal. During an assignment to report on his life in Miami, I was standing next to a huge mural of him in the Wynwood Art District when a family of three turned up, all wearing Argentina shirts. They were also speaking Spanish with a South American accent, so I assumed they were from Argentina, but I was wrong. They were from Colombia.

"I'm not a Colombia fan. I'm a fan of Messi," the father of the group said.

Messi had followers from all over the world — Africa, Spain (or, more specifically, Catalonia), and the number of Americans interested in him was huge.

What enhanced Messi's appeal in the US was the distinction between him and the World Cup itself, which was so cheap and tacky. In the tournament of Powerade Hydration Breaks, Fifa Power Rankings and dynamic pricing, you had a 5ft 7in maestro showing how to play football in its purest form.

In many ways, Messi's appeal in the eyes of true football fans is enhanced by the fact he seemed unbothered, even perplexed, by the interest in him.

When a cheer echoed around the stadium in Dallas during a break in play against Jordan, Messi popped his head out from the back row of the bench to see what the commotion was about, only to notice his face was being shown on the huge screens above the pitch. He tutted and retreated to the back row to enjoy his downtime — he did not start as it was a dead-rubber game, although he scored, of course, during his 30-minute appearance as a substitute.

He is the ultimate humble, low-maintenance star, which goes back to his upbringing in Rosario, a place I was fortunate enough to visit in the build-up to the Qatar 2022 World Cup to write a piece on Messi's childhood.

Drug crime has mercifully gone down since then, but the area in which Messi grew up was rough. "If we go down that street, we will get shot at," our photographer Marcelo said, a couple of blocks away from Messi's former family home, which is now unoccupied. During the World Cup, I came across people who have known Messi for the best part of two decades and they said he had not changed at all.

The manner in which he announced his international retirement was typical of him. Just a picture on Instagram of a hand-written statement he had scribbled two days after Argentina's heartbreaking loss in that ugly final.

There is a hint in it that he is struggling to come to terms with the fact his international career, which spanned 21 years, 207 games and six World Cups, is at an end. He initially writes: "I think that the time has come [to retire]," before scribbling out the first two words and replacing them with: "I understand".

It will take a while for Argentina, like Messi, to digest that he will not play for his country again — and the next World Cup will certainly feel strange without him.

De Zerbi once said Mudryk could win Ballon d'Or — now he must revive him

Signing winger is a Hail Mary from head coach. Resurrecting his career would be more impressive than saving Tottenham from relegation

DARREN WALSH/CHELSEA FC/GETTY IMAGES

Tom Allnutt

Roberto De Zerbi once said he would view it as a "personal defeat" if he failed to take Mykhailo Mudryk to the highest level of the game, but he could never have known the obstacles he would be up against.

Mudryk was one of the most thrilling young talents in Europe when De Zerbi was his head coach at Shakhtar Donetsk back in 2022 but the Mudryk who De Zerbi is bringing on loan to Tottenham Hotspur is now at the pit of a steep decline, rather than the cusp of a startling ascent.

After their success together at Shakhtar, Mudryk returns to the guidance of De Zerbi with the added baggage of almost two years struggling while playing for Chelsea in the Premier League and then almost two years not playing at all, after his ban for testing positive for meldonium in October 2024 prevented him from entering Chelsea's training ground and restricted his competitive minutes to the padel court.

For Tottenham, a season-long loan deal for Mudryk, with an option to buy the 25-year-old winger for £75 million, feels like a Hail Mary move at the end of a transfer window that has been bold in terms of money spent but actually notably conservative in terms of the profile of players signed. Nine out of nine of Tottenham's new recruits have played in the Premier League, seven are 25 or older and not one is younger than 21. After all the uncertainty and trauma of nearly getting relegated last season, Tottenham hope they have added a string of sure-things.

But Mudryk is the one asterisk, the kind of why-not, last-minute loan move that even Daniel Levy might have been proud of. As a bonus on top, an extra perhaps to Cody Gakpo or Iliman Ndiaye, it might have carried appeal. But as the answer to Tottenham's genuine need for another forward, especially on the left wing, Mudryk comes with big potential but very few guarantees.

The result, after £380 million spent this summer, is that Tottenham look well stocked in defence and midfield but still light up front, despite the additions of Sávio for a fee that could rise to £85 million and Omar Marmoush, on loan but with an obligation to buy for £60 million, from Manchester City. Much will depend on how not only those two fare but also the pack of absentees, with Mohammed Kudus, Dominic Solanke, James Maddison and Dejan Kulusevski all either recently returned or soon returning. Xavi Simons and Wilson Odobert are out longer-term.

The big question is whether Mudryk can rediscover the traits that put him at the centre of a transfer frenzy in January 2023, when Arsenal and Mikel Arteta were prepared to pay almost £90 million to buy him from Shakhtar Donetsk, only for Chelsea to barge in instead. An electric left winger, with height, speed and a handful of stellar performances in the Champions League, Mudryk was to many the must-have talent in European football 3½ years ago.

De Zerbi was at the wheel for Mudryk's remarkable rise, with Shakhtar officials remembering how the Italian insisted Mudryk be recalled from a meandering loan at Desna Chernihiv and how he told Mudryk: "Make it with me or don't make it." By then, Mudryk was drifting. He had joined Shakhtar aged 15 and been called up from the youth sides to train with the first team, but doubts about his intensity meant he was swiftly sent back.

Those doubts were more about a lack of discipline and concentration than bad behaviour. At Shakhtar, they remember Mudryk as a "shy boy", but with a "strong mentality", who would never rest, always staying on after training to practise his shooting.

Mudryk became a regular under De Zerbi and then soared in the months after the Italian left amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine. He scored eight goals in ten games in the autumn of 2022 and, crucially for his suitors, three goals in the Champions League. In January 2023, when Arsenal and Chelsea were pushing, De Zerbi, then in charge of Brighton & Hove Albion, said Mudryk had the potential to win the Ballon d'Or.

After enduring a difficult time at Chelsea, Mudryk has joined Tottenham, right, and reunited with De Zerbi, left, who was his manager at Shakhtar

But did he? Mudryk was always aggressively marketed by Shakhtar, the noise cranked up by executives who had every reason to make the most of their one Ukrainian gem. The club's most valuable foreign players, and head coach, had to leave because of the Russian war and those departures helped Mudryk too, creating the space for him to play and thrive.

Perhaps a middle-step was needed. When Brentford inquired about Mudryk in the summer of 2022, they thought a deal worth £25 million was possible but six months later, Mudryk was worth nearly four times that. Chelsea, flailing under Graham Potter, were desperate while Shakhtar were happy to encourage the bidding war. Darijo Srna, the club's sporting director, said that "after Kylian Mbappé and Vinícius Junior", Mudryk was "the best left winger in Europe". Mudryk clearly had huge potential but the argument he was overpriced — even Shakhtar were shocked by the fee Chelsea paid — gained weight when Mudryk struggled in his first 22 months in the Premier League. Enzo Maresca said Mudryk was a "slow learner" and he was demoted to Chelsea's team for the Conference League. In Mudryk's defence, there were plenty of young talents finding life difficult at Chelsea but even before his ban, few would have predicted he was about to make that move a success.

The ban halted any chance of progress as Mudryk was handed a four-year suspension, which was resolved with the FA in July this year after the World Anti Doping Agency increased the threshold permitted for meldonium, the substance for which Mudryk tested positive. If his sample were to be taken today, Mudryk would not be found to have committed a violation. The result is Mudryk has not played since November 2024 and he arrives at Spurs with doubts around fitness, focus and his capacity for the Premier League. De Zerbi may have rescued Tottenham from relegation but Mudryk would be his most impressive revival yet.

Kushner hires Musk lawyer to battle Uefa legal case over World Cup sell-off

CONTINUED FROM BACK

said that had he known the scale of the backlash, his firm Thrive Capital "would not have gotten involved" in the Fifa Forward Enterprise (FFE) plan.

Kushner said in a statement: "Money in football has historically been concentrated amongst a small group of countries. The idea behind FFE was to direct more capital and equity equally amongst all 211 member countries, providing significantly more investment to underdeveloped nations to nurture local talent, support grassroots football, enhance the fan experience, and ultimately grow the global game everywhere.

"It was an idea that every member association would vote on, not an obligation or determination. While we stand behind the motivations of FFE, we failed to appreciate the political dynamics of global football, and the lengths some would go to. Thrive has a long track record of being a partner to all constituents. Had we known what this would devolve into, we would not have gotten involved."

Spiro successfully defended Musk in a notorious defamation trial relating to comments he made about the rescuer of junior football players from a cave in Thailand. He also represented the actor Alec Baldwin, who had involuntary manslaughter charges dismissed and has acted for the rapper Jay-Z.

Court documents submitted by Uefa's lawyers say the plan to sell a 20 per cent stake in Fifa's tournaments for $4.2 billion was an "absurdly low" figure … "that was neither the product of an open, competitive auction, nor tested by any independent valuer".

The filings state: "Uefa and its counsel are contemplating a Swiss criminal proceeding against Infantino and possibly other Fifa officials for criminal mismanagement under Article 158 of the Swiss Criminal Code, together with such further or alternative charges as the developed factual record may support."

The legal filings also seek a court order for Kushner's Thrive Capital fund and Fifa's Miami office to disclose all documents and electronic data relating to FFE, and a court order for subpoenas for Thrive and Kushner to give evidence.

Kushner is facing court claims to disclose all communications relating to Infantino's scheme

Sport

Maresca now has squad that should challenge Arsenal

City's new director of football gifts new head coach transfer window as lavish as any under Pep, writes **Paul Hirst**

There was no sense of panic in his voice, but the message Enzo Maresca delivered after Manchester City's Community Shield defeat by Arsenal was clear.

"Any new signing, the sooner they arrive the better because we are starting the Premier League in one week and if they start to work with us as soon as possible it's better that they can also understand the way we want to play," Maresca said after the 3-0 loss.

It is safe to say that Hugo Viana, his director of football, was listening. In the two weeks that followed, the Portuguese swept more deadwood out of the squad and brought in yet more players, culminating with deadline day deals for Enzo Fernández and Iliman Ndiaye.

There were doubts about whether Viana could step up following Txiki Begiristain's retirement last September.

As director of football for the previous 13 years, Begiristain played a vital role in shaping City's success, landing big names such as Erling Haaland, Kevin De Bruyne and David Silva, but Viana has proved a worthy successor so far, judging by the fan reaction online to City's transfer business yesterday.

The proof will be in the pudding. If some signings flop, and City do not win a trophy, he will be criticised, but this looks to have been a tremendously successful window for Viana, who has lowered the average age of the squad to 25, disposed of unhappy squad players for big fees, and brought in six new signings, three of whom have 308 Premier League appearances between them.

Maresca's predecessor Pep Guardiola always talked about "shaking up" the squad to reinvigorate it every summer but Viana has given the squad quite a jolt, with ten players from last year's contingent departing. John Stones and Bernardo Silva left as free agents, while Jack Grealish and Omar Marmoush left on loan. James Trafford, Nathan Aké, Rodri, Tijjani Reijnders, Nico González and Sávio have all departed for big fees. If you include the £60 million fee that Tottenham must pay for Marmoush next summer, City will have collected a club record £361.5 million in transfer fees this summer.

That has enabled them to fund a record £426.9 million spree which includes the arrivals of Fernández, Ndiaye, Elliot Anderson, Gerónimo Rulli and Allan, the 22-year-old winger from Palmeiras. A £65 million net spend is a huge win for City given that five of the departing players are 30 or over and some of them (González, Sávio and Marmoush) have performed poorly of late. Losing the experience of Rodri, Silva, Stones and Aké is a risk, but leaders like Rúben Dias and Haaland remain while Fernández and Anderson have leadership skills too. With the exception of a striker, City have two players for every position.

A stickler would have asked for a proper right back, but Maresca is comfortable with the squad because he wants to play three centre halves, with the fourth member of the defence allowed to venture forward.

At £85 million, Ayyoub Bouaddi, 18, is expensive but was highly coveted and after buying Anderson and Fernández, he will not be thrust into the spotlight every week. Ndiaye is likely to compete with Antoine Semenyo on the right, although the former Bournemouth man played on the left in pre-season because of an injury to Jérémy Doku.

Semenyo's game is all about pace and power, whereas Ndiaye is happy to play with the ball at his feet in tight areas around the box, which is a scenario that City face regularly as they play against teams in a low block. That leaves Foden and Rayan Cherki competing for the No10 role, which is quite the contest. Both can play in the same team too.

This is an 8 or 9/10 window for City, the only downside being that they left it late to sign Fernández and Ndiaye. In an ideal world, Rodri would have stayed to help ease Anderson in too, but he wanted to leave.

Overall, Viana has left Maresca with a squad that has the potential to challenge Arsenal for the Premier League title.

The Fernández saga has hurt Chelsea but it may work out for the best going forward, writes **Peter Rutzler**

After the end of the Enzo Fernández saga, it was Manchester City who were left the stronger team. Chelsea had long insisted that they had wanted to strengthen their squad before sanctioning the departure of their World Cup winning midfielder, but despite a last-gasp attempt to sign Lamine Camara from Monaco for £47 million — with the French club withdrawing from the transfer at the 11th hour despite a club-to-club written agreement — they were unable to replace him. They may have gained an extra £5 million since setting a deadline for a £120 million bid last month, but it was they who were ultimately forced to cave and agree to the sale. City's delay before initiating formal club talks made it challenging to find a worthy replacement and Fernández's desire to leave only added to the pressure. Chelsea felt they had no choice but to sell him, knowing their squad risked being weakened without him.

But they may still come to look at Fernández's departure as worthwhile business.

Whether he is worth a British record of £125 million, tied with Alexander Isak, is debatable and it was even questionable whether he was worth his initial price of £106.8 million, which Chelsea paid Benfica back in January 2023. But given the ebbs and flows of the BlueCo era, it is clear that Fernández is a very good player, and at his best he was important and influential to Chelsea. He contributed to 11 goals in his first full season but under Enzo Maresca those numbers rocketed, to 26 in 2024-25 and 22 in 2025-26. The long-standing relationship between Fernández and Maresca, now City's manager, was plainly a decisive factor in this deal. Maresca improved him as a player, encouraging to break into the box more often, to score more goals, and to be more decisive.

Yet the tale of tape may not all be negative from this bout for Chelsea, even with the loss of a talented individual, and the strengthening of a rival in the short term. In fact, they may well come to this see this deal as worthwhile business.

Fernández has, more than once, been a distraction for the club, and closure will not be unwelcome. This saga is a reflection, one in which he immediately cast doubt on his future in the aftermath of a Champions League defeat through his media comments in March, and he was then suspended by the club for two weeks for continuing to suggest he wanted to go to Madrid.

The legacy of this summer meant the prospect of keeping him and knowing that he would be a stable, content presence, was not guaranteed and there was not a huge queue of suitors for him this summer.

In his three years at the club, he was always backed by Chelsea supporters, but he was also divisive. Two years ago, he had to apologise to his team-mates after a racism row erupted when he posted a video on Instagram which appeared to show him, alongside his Argentina team-mates, singing a derogatory chant about the France national team. It threatened to split the squad.

But there was also an underlying tactical question about Fernández playing under Xabi Alonso. Would the 25-year-old be a natural fit into his system? Alonso prefers to have two sitting players at the base of midfield and two attacking midfielders in front of them.

Fernández, at his best, is a more dynamic No8, a box-to-box player who never really looked comfortable when tied down next to Caicedo. The sale is a record figure and it takes Chelsea's incomings to in excess of £415 million in transfer fees alone, including add-ons, which is a European record.

Chelsea intend to strengthen again and are likely to be active in January. It may allow time to reopen closed doors, to Bournemouth's Alex Scott or Adam Wharton at Crystal Palace. Morgan Gibbs-White, of Nottingham Forest, is a player of a different profile they admire. The Fernández saga has ultimately hurt Chelsea but in the longer term it may not be the worst eventuality. Though if it turns City into a force, under a coach who walked out on the club at the turn of the year, then those positives will be harder to keep in focus.

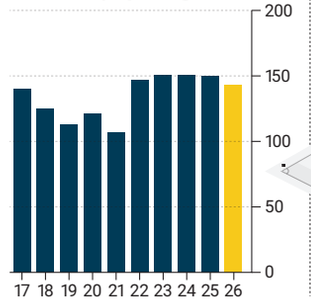
Your guide to the 2026

Figures accurate to 10.30pm last night

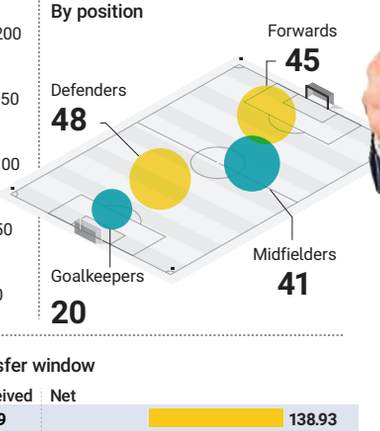
Net spending by Premier League

Summer	Net	Spent	Received
2017	£667m	£1,455m	£788m
2018	£908m	£1,302m	£394m
2019	£607m	£1,389m	£782m
2020	£908m	£1,301m	£393m
2021	£617m	£1,203m	£586m
2022	£1,186m	£1,965m	£779m
2023	£1,075m	£2,412m	£1,337m
2024	£623m	£2,018m	£1,395m
2025	£1,400m	£3,100m	£1,690m
2026	£1,232m	£3,169m	£1,937m

Number of players signed



By position



Net spending by clubs this transfer window

£m	Spent	Received	Net
Arsenal	194.82	55.89	138.93
Aston Villa	257.53	309.04	-51.51
Bournemouth	69.31	11.5	57.81
Brentford	106.63	11.02	95.61
Brighton	123.1	164.81	-41.71
Chelsea	348.89	249.76	99.13
Coventry	127.43	4.42	123.01
C Palace	54.3	101.91	-47.61
Everton	85.14	110.6	-25.46
Fulham	77.54	17.59	59.95
Hull	118.28	17.39	100.89
Ipswich	172.3	16.61	155.69
Leeds	82.95	30.11	52.84
Liverpool	226.99	25.74	201.25
Man City	326.96	289.08	37.88
Man United	148.58	47.74	100.84
Newcastle	268.51	239.34	29.17
Nottm Forest	118.56	138.01	-19.45
Sunderland	35.08	28.09	6.99
Tottenham	304.28	140.88	163.4
Total	3,247.2m	2,009.5m	1,237.7m

Why top-flight spending broke record again (but with a key difference)

Martyn Ziegler Chief Sports Reporter

Another summer gone, another record broken. The rest of Europe will once more have gazed with envious eyes as Premier League clubs indulged in another year of lavish spending.

It had seemed at one point that last year's figure of £3.1 billion gross spending during the summer transfer window, which obliterated the previous record of £2.4 billion, would not be reached. But as the end of the transfer window neared, clubs embarked on a spree that to some looked more akin to panic buying, perhaps for fear of being left behind by their rivals.

Even before Manchester City had set a joint British transfer record by signing Enzo Fernández from Chelsea for £125 million, the summer 2025 figure had been passed but once that move was confirmed, a new £3.3 billion mark of gross spending had been set.

There are some significant differences compared to last summer however. Chelsea are once again among the biggest spenders with £349 million splashed out, but they are actually in the black having earned considerably more than they spent in sales and loan fees.

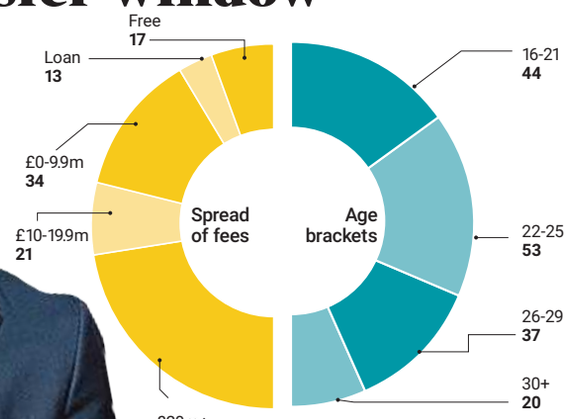
Chelsea are subject to strict spending controls by Uefa as part of a settlement agreement for previous breaches of financial rules and so have had little option but to balance the books or risk a European ban. Uefa will also closely study the value of transfers between

summer transfer window

Most expensive signings this month*

Enzo Fernandez** Chelsea to Man City	**£125m**
Morgan Rogers Aston Villa to Chelsea	**£117m**
Elliot Anderson Nott'm Forest to Man City	**£116m**
Bradley Barcola PSG to Liverpool	**£106m**
Sandro Tonali Newcastle to Spurs	**£92.6m**
Mateus Fernandes West Ham to Spurs	**£85m**

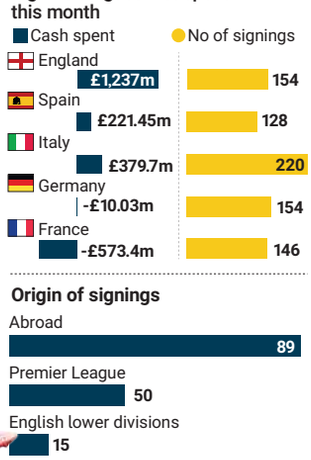
*Initial fees, excluding potential add-ons
** subject to completion



Nationalities of foreign players new to the Premier League

French	12	Moroccan	2
Spanish	8	Bosnian	2
Portuguese	7	Ghanaian	2
Dutch	7	Egyptian	1
Brazilian	6	Slovakian	1
Argentinian	6	Cameroonian	1
Senegalese	6	Malian	1
Italian	5	Croatian	1
German	5	Algerian	1
Austrian	5	Canadian	1
Japanese	4	Kazakhstani	1
Belgian	4	Guinean	1
Swiss	3	Jamaican	1
Nigerian	3	Israeli	1
Ivorian	3	American	1
Swedish	3	Danish	1
Ecuadorean	2	Norwegian	1
Greek	2	Australian	1
DR Congolese	2	Paraguayan	1
Uruguayan	2	Serbian	1
Colombian	2	Czech	1
		Ukrainian	1

Big five leagues' net spend this month



Origin of signings

Chelsea and Aston Villa — it previously imposed downward adjustments on deals involving the two clubs.

Another difference is around the net spending by the Premier League as a whole. It is anticipated to be slightly lower than in 2025, £1.26 billion compared to £1.41 billion, as clubs put a premium on buying from other English clubs: the risk of buying a player with Premier League experience is significantly less, but the price tag is often higher.

Lower net spending by clubs also means less risk of them being in breach of Profitability and Sustainability Rules (PSR) or the new squad cost ratio (SCR) rules operated by the Premier League and Uefa where clubs are fined for spending more than a set percentage (the Premier League's limit is 85 per cent, Uefa's is 70 per cent) on transfers and player wages.

Professor Kieran Maguire, a football finance author at the University of Liverpool, said there have been several drivers of the record spending.

Once again, there are nine English clubs playing in Europe of which six are in the Champions League. That competition generates £40 million-£150 million in prize money plus gate receipts, which can be as high as £6 million to £7 million a match.

"Those clubs need to have a strong depth of squad to be competitive for two games a week," Maguire said. "There is also a scarcity in some positions, especially strikers, which has driven up prices."

There are nine new managers in the Premier League, also a record, for whom this was their first summer transfer window.

Five of those are at "Big Six" clubs: the two Manchester clubs, Liverpool, Chelsea and Tottenham Hotspur, and they are under pressure to challenge the champions Arsenal.

"They want to recruit players who can adapt to their style of play and that means recruiting," said Maguire, who added that the increased percentage of deals between English clubs means record sales income which provides funds for selling clubs to buy.

The other inflationary factor is the behaviour of the promoted clubs. Ipswich Town, Coventry City and Hull City have all spent more than £100 million — effectively one season's TV money — in the hope of staying up.

Compared to the rest of Europe, English clubs continue to enjoy the fruits of huge overseas TV deals, now totalling £2.1 billion a year. So while Real Madrid can still keep their stars such as Vinícius Júnior out of the Premier League's clutches, it is the spending power of the English top flight's medium and small-sized clubs — and as a result their competitiveness — that really makes the Premier League stand out from the rest of Europe.

Ndiaye has joined City from Everton

Everton end weaker as owner's ambition comes under fire

David Moyes left with depleted squad that cannot afford injuries after difficult summer, writes **Paul Joyce**

Whatever the gauge, and there are various calculations that can be applied, Everton have succeeded in achieving the one thing no club wants from a transfer window. On many different levels, they will end up weaker than when it opened.

Squad numbers alone say that is the case, with David Moyes having 22 outfield players last season and with negotiations continuing late last night that would leave him with 19 if everything was agreed. If not, he would have 17. Moyes also lost one of his most influential players in Iliman Ndiaye and for a price that does not comply with his own criterion, which stressed it would need an "absolutely outrageous" offer for Everton to sell.

A £60 million move to Manchester City, rising to £65 million, is not that figure and certainly not in this market, albeit it is better than selling to Tottenham Hotspur for £60 million and then spending £35 million of that on Richarlison.

Then there is the owner, The Friedkin Group (TFG), which has inflicted immeasurable damage on itself by pushing for the sale of homegrown midfielder Harrison Armstrong to Nottingham Forest for £35 million, only to pull out amid the prospect of a supporter uprising.

All of which was not how matters were supposed to play out in January when club officials stated that funds were being stockpiled for the summer when phase two of Everton's rebuild would be implemented. Instead, TFG's entire ambition for the club is being scrutinised 20 months into its reign and Everton supporter Paul Quinn (otherwise known as The Esk) summarised it as such in a forensic overview of affairs.

"The Friedkin Group is aiming for a club that is cheap to run, compliant by construction, and worth materially more than it cost," he wrote in an analysis available on X. "Competitive ambition (if any) is being funded out of efficiency, not out of equity."

Doubts over TFG's appetite for the long haul now swirl, but there was a capital raise of £13.8 million from them on July 27 which is for projects related to Hill Dickinson Stadium, the training ground at Finch Farm and Goodison Park, which is now home to the women's team.

There was also a £40 million transfer over the summer to cover the compensation payment awarded to Burnley, who successfully sued Everton over a breach of the Premier League's Profitability and Sustainability Rules for the 2021-22 season in a landmark case. While that is subject to an appeal, it was not supposed to have an impact on transfer dealings.

TFG believed the end of last season was a "failure", CEO Angus Kinnear said recently, as Everton dropped out of European contention when winless in the final seven matches as injuries and patchy form took their toll. How Europe should now be the target when Moyes's squad has been left depleted is something of a mystery. His role is manager, not miracle worker.

Before last night's deadline, Everton were working on finalising what would bring outgoings from last term's squad to eight: Seamus Coleman, Idrissa Gueye (both out of contract), Adam Aznou (Malaga, loan), Tim Iroegbunam (Hull City), Beto (Fiorentina), Dwight McNeil (Crystal Palace), Nathan Patterson (Torino) and Ndiaye.

They hoped their incomings would include Folarin Balogun and Ainsley Maitland-Niles joining Christian Norgaard, Hayden Hackney and Brennan Johnson. In addition, loan deals for Merlin Röhl and Tyrique George have been made permanent and Jack Grealish is returning on loan. However, there were late concerns over Balogun's £40 million move from Monaco owing to a medical issue, which prompted Everton to fail with inquiries about the availability of Manchester United's Joshua Zirkzee and Aston Villa's Tammy Abraham. Such is the perils of selling without having replacements cut and dried.

There are some potentially astute signings and upgrades and TFG has spent more than it has recouped (about £85 million to £108.5 million before Grealish's expensive loan deal is considered). The end of the search for a right back may even be welcomed by Andy Burnham, the prime minister, given his plea several weeks ago, although Maitland-Niles, who was in the final season of his contract at Lyon, was not even fifth choice.

Moyes presides over a smaller squad now shorn of the influential Ndiaye

Overall, Moyes cannot afford injuries and will be relying on Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall to continue to inspire and Jarrad Branthwaite to stay fit.

Moyes found his ambition questioned by fans last week when he asked whether the yearning for silverware was more important than Premier League survival. That was perceived as being overly negative.

Yet the Scot finds himself having to tread a fine line and maybe he knew more than he could say freely. His quote — "the manager is an Evertonian" — at the height of the drama around Armstrong was a brilliant line and a reminder to some of where his priorities have always been.

Moyes is in the final year of his contract and an extension should be forthcoming. He is a winner from the tumult of recent days but it speaks volumes that he will not feel that way.

Sport

The real Lomu

Rugby's first superstar and his private battle off the field

Rugby, page 49

Fernández agrees record £125m switch

Chelsea fury as deal for replacement collapses

Peter Rutzler and Paul Joyce

Enzo Fernández was on the brink of a joint British record transfer to Manchester City last night after agreeing to leave Chelsea for £125 million.

The deal was struck on deadline day after two days of talks between the two clubs. Fernández said in a message to Chelsea fans last night: "I haven't been in a good place. Life is about making decisions and I find myself having to make one of those difficult decisions."

Chelsea tried to sign the Monaco midfielder Lamine Camara as a replacement, and agreed a £47 million fee with the French club in the hours before the deadline. However, Monaco then decided not to sell him, leaving Chelsea livid.

The record fee for Fernández matched the amount paid by Liverpool for Alexander Isak's signing from Newcastle United last year, and it also meant that Chelsea surpassed more than £400 million in sales for a summer transfer window — a Premier League and European all-time high. The total spending by Premier League clubs passed £3.1billion before the 11pm deadline, setting a record for a transfer window. However, because a greater proportion of that was spent on players from other Premier League clubs, the net spend was lower than last summer's.

The deal was part of a dramatic final few hours of the transfer window, as City continued to back their new head coach, Enzo Maresca, by also completing a £65 million deal for Iliman Ndiaye. Ndiaye signed a five-year contract after completing a switch from Everton, who confirmed the loan re-signing of Jack Grealish and were trying to finalise a deal to buy American striker Folarin Balogun from Monaco. At one stage, the deal was placed in jeopardy after a medical, but as the deadline passed, Everton submitted a deal sheet to the Premier League to obtain extra time to work on Balogun's signing. The chance of the deal being completed appeared to be a factor in Monaco's withdrawing from the proposed sale of Camara.

Premier League clubs launched an extended raid on the French top flight yesterday, with Newcastle United confirming the signing of forward Matias Fernandez-Pardo from Lille for £51.4 million, with a further £4.2 million due in add-ons. Nick Woltemade, the club's record signing, left to join Juventus on loan.

There was further drama as Crystal Palace and Sunderland fought for the signature of Lyon's Malick Fofana, a 21-year-old winger who had appeared on Arsenal's radar. After an initial hijack by Palace over a deal agreed with Sunderland, it appeared that Sunderland had won out as the deadline approached last night.

Liverpool completed the £30 million signing of 18-year-old goalkeeper Lucca Brughmans from Belgian side Genk. Leeds United, meanwhile, reached an agreement with Eintracht Frankfurt to sign midfielder Jean-Matteo Bahoya.

Deadline day moves, pages 55-57

CRYSTAL PIX/MB MEDIA/GETTY IMAGES

Fernández was set to be reunited at City with his former manager Maresca

Stokes' record Big Bash deal

Simon Wilde

Ben Stokes has signed to play for Adelaide Strikers in this winter's Big Bash, his first franchise deal since retiring as an England cricketer in late June.

The contract is understood to be worth about £265,000, a record fee for the league, which has shifted to a direct-signing model, allowing clubs greater freedom in how much they pay players.

The tournament runs from mid-December to late January at a time when England's Test squad will be touring South Africa. It is still possible that Stokes, 35, will head to that country for another franchise tournament, the SA20, starting on January 17.

That is the same day the regular Big Bash season ends, with the finals running from January 19 to 26. The SA20 finishes on February 21. Stokes signed to play for MI Cape Town in the 2025

Continued on page 51

Kushner hires Musk lawyer

Martyn Ziegler Chief Sports Reporter

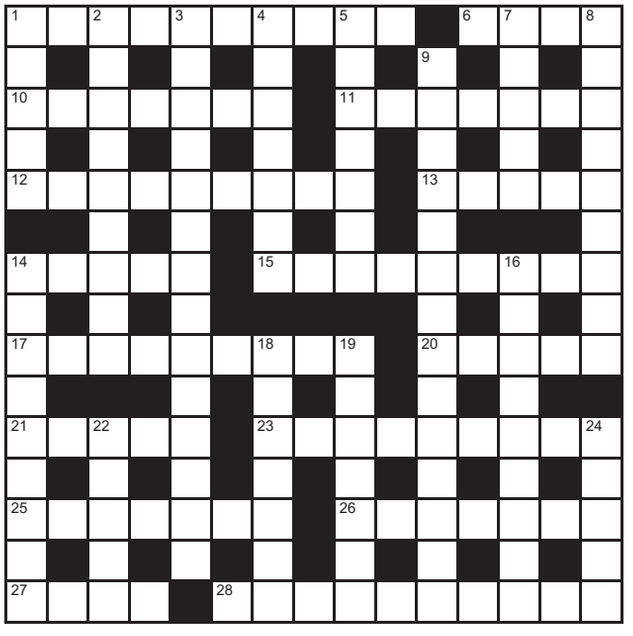
Joshua Kushner, the venture capitalist who had been lined up to be the lead investor in buying stakes in the World Cup, has appointed Elon Musk's lawyer to represent him in a legal challenge from Uefa.

Kushner, who has expressed regret at being involved in the scheme, has appointed Alex Spiro, of the New York law firm Quinn Emmanuel. The firm has also represented Fifa since the 2015 corruption scandal broke.

Kushner, the brother of Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared, is facing court claims in the United States from Uefa's lawyers to disclose all communications relating to the Fifa president Gianni Infantino's scheme. Uefa is preparing to bring criminal proceedings against Infantino in Switzerland. He

Continued on page 55

Times Crossword 29,637



ACROSS

1 Lace clothing of empress in photo call (10)
6 Drop beer on the counter (4)
10 Green female wearing uniform pressed by Vincent? (7)
11 Setter and former land owner lower emission (7)
12 Fellow American is not moving drawings from vessels? (9)
13 Vicar's digs maybe woman senses to some extent (5)
14 Radical writer introducing case for aesthetics (5)
15 Bond catches one youth crossing large barrage (9)
17 New tree beginning to leaf inside of foul city (9)
20 Pole joining another cycling in country (5)
21 Inexperienced person covering for archdeacon from island (5)
23 Twisted bone by sewer blocked by British fool (9)
25 Take over in the air when flying without introduction of adult (7)
26 Nick emptied tanker by one river after another (7)
27 Primate keeping close to bars vaulted enclosure (4)
28 Good lines within contest important for future princess (5,5)

DOWN

1 Cast piece of armour abandoned by lake (5)
2 Some journalists in a group sent up key workers (9)
3 Ostracised soldier burying explosive around old bay (4,2,8)
4 Lots of ferries originally circled by shoal quickly list (4,3)
5 Males recalled wings of enormous island deity (7)
7 Master essentially coerces spare guards (5)
8 Picked up harmony note inside of hall gradually (9)
9 Snag small navel decoration perhaps on black hair (9,5)
14 Ceramic hob in Caen needing repair (4,5)
16 Artist is overwhelmed by shock valuation (9)
18 Throw back mostly what may have been in pot (7)
19 Wandering about over grass covering centre of domicile (7)
22 Temperature lowered in public pool for Thai rhino (5)
24 Tense in verse one periodically raised by Yankee (5)

Yesterday's solution 29,636

B	A	D	I	N	A	G	E	■	K	U	W	A	I	T
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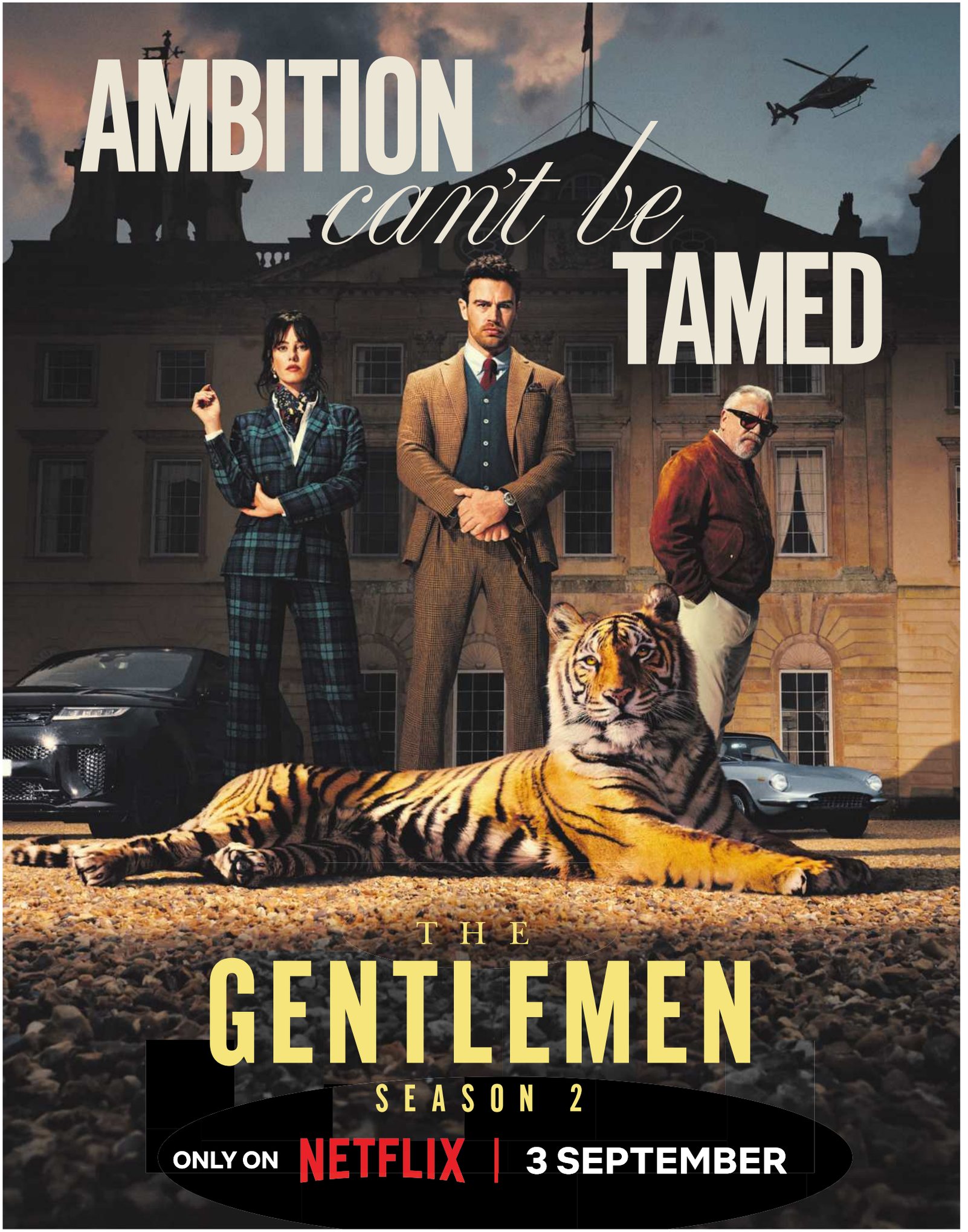
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September 2 | **2026**

This? Oh, it's just new season M&S

Anna Murphy on the clothes you'll be wearing this autumn

Coat, £70, jumper, £36, skirt, £40, boots, £140, sunglasses, £16, and bag, £36. Above right: jacket, £70, blazer, £85, and trousers, £46. All marksandspencer.com

Why 'bungalow legs' may mean the end of my single-storey dream

Carol Midgley

Could we have a quiet word about "bungalow legs"? Perhaps you own a pair yourself, stubby little tree trunks wobbling about under your wide-legged trousers, because you live in a one-storey house that never has to trouble them with stairs? If so, bless you. It's not good news.

A new study finds that people who climb the wooden hill every day are 39 per cent less likely to die from heart-related problems and 24 per cent less likely to die from any cause than people who don't scale stairs very often. They probably have the thunder thighs to prove it (my words, not theirs).

Stair climbers are also less likely to have a stroke, according to the study from the University of East Anglia, because the act of mounting (no, not that act, sir) trains both your leg and respiratory muscles (though, thinking about it, the other one might help with that too).

I should be feeling insufferably smug now. I live in a house with not one, not two, but three and a half flights of stairs, which I traipse up and down all day long. I am also the annoying arse who scuttles past stationary people standing to the right on escalators so that I can later bore people with my step count. Yes, I know. Don't you think I have tried getting a life?

The truth is, though, I don't feel smug about it, even though I can't deny it's cheering to hear that climbing also improves balance — I suppose the implication for the bungalow legs brigade is that they are forever keeling over on their fankles (fat ankles).

But a year ago, as I wrote here, my husband suffered vasovagal syncope, fainted and then crashed elbow over tit down the stairs. As I sat in the hall with him wiping the blood off his smashed forehead and chin, one of my first thoughts was: "We should move to a bungalow."

The problem with that is my husband has made it clear he would rather feed one of his appendages through a mincer than do so, because he sees them as death's waiting room. I take his point — they can look very depressing. One nickname for coffins is "the six-foot bungalow", which really doesn't help. I hate even sleeping on the ground floor in a hotel.

What good are sexy limbs and a tip-top heart, however, if you are lying dead in a heap in the hall suffering from "staircase broken neck"? Bungalow legs seem, on balance, the better option. Single-storey dwellers can always, you know, heave their Michelin Man thighs on to a step machine.

Seriously though, millions and millions of people around the world live in flats, taking communal lifts to get upstairs, and they don't all have weak, blubbery pins. Why just bungalows? Do you ever hear of people suffering from "apartment arse", "flat fupa" (fatty upper pubic area) or "penthouse chub-rub"? No.

I don't doubt the findings and know that running up the stairs definitely increases your heart rate — I've just done it and am puffing like a porpoise. But surely the most pertinent point about bungalow dwellers is that they tend to be older people in the first place, so their tickers will be in less good shape?

I won't win the marital argument on this but can anyone deny it is safer to "have a fall" in a bungalow? Plus, it's so much kinder to a lady's Cooper's ligaments *not* to run downstairs braless to answer the door first thing in the morning, both hands clamped to the chest because they feel as if they'll snap. It's all swings and roundabouts.

Is your leg hair truly criminal?

I see that hairy-limbed men in Tokyo are getting laser treatment to achieve smooth, bald pins after being shin-shamed by female colleagues. Many men wore shorts to work during the heatwave and were accused of "leg hair harassment" by women who found the sight repulsive. My colleague Richard Lloyd Parry reported that a new term, *sune-hara* (shin harassment), has been coined, some men paying about £400 to get polished, hairless limbs.

I suppose I should welcome men doing what women were pressured to do for decades, bending for once to the female gaze and becoming waxy Ken dolls. But mostly I think we're all mad.

For years women plucked, shaved and waxed their pubic topiary down to parched scrubland. Now that vulvic fashion has changed, many want to re-lay the parlour like a tufted Wilton carpet, paying thousands of pounds for "pubic hair transplants", a thought that brings tears to the eyes. I've no idea how effective they are but I can't help picturing a small, perished bath mat.

Posh diners on the pinch

We keep hearing that middle-class theft is on the rise. Now it seems even Michelin-starred restaurants in France aren't safe from light-fingered folk in nice shoes.

And it's not just cutlery that's being swiped. At the Paul Bocuse restaurant a man tried to snaffle a silver candlestick under his long raincoat. At L'Émulsion one diner took a lavatory roll holder, complete with screws and wall plugs, leaving just the plaster.

A similar thing used to happen to Jamie Oliver, who was forced to weld on the lavatory handles at his restaurants. Who would want to import a thousand strangers' feculent germs into their house?

Do you remember last year when a woman walked into the loos of the Jardim Rodizio Grill in Altrincham and (allegedly) left with the sink? CCTV footage showed a hole where the imitation stone bowl had been and her emerging with a tote bag suddenly bulging.

It's obviously only a matter of time before someone makes off with a well-used urinal in their backpack. Now I've made myself feel unwell.

Who drinks

A new study shows that the over-40s consume more alcohol than younger generations. Four writers from their twenties to their sixties reveal all

My wine habit took off when I became a father

Michael Odell, 62

When I was 14 a band called Sham 69 released a single called *Hurry Up Harry*. After the exhortation to Harry to get his skates on, the chorus continues: "We're going down the pub!" That chorus marks the beginning of my "alcohol journey". My teenage friends also heard this punky clarion call to booze and even though we couldn't get served in pubs, we managed to buy cider from a corner shop and drink it down at the local lock-up garages. I hated it.

So how did I make it into the cohort of drinkers that finds it hard to imbibe sensibly? New data from Our Future Health, a UK-wide health research programme, says people in their forties are nearly twice as likely to exceed government drinking guidelines (14 units a week) as those in their twenties. Just over 12 per cent of 18 to 29s are likely to exceed the limit compared with 19.2 per cent of those in their forties.

It's even worse for those in my gang: the 60 to 69s. Some 28.3 per cent of us sneer at Harry when he points out that we've had enough and wouldn't we like a hot beverage instead? "No, I don't want a cup of tea!" is the answer, as Sham 69's Jimmy Pursey memorably sneers on that song.

I shouldn't have turned out a boozer because I didn't grow up around it. My dad was a pilot so he mostly abstained; my mum occasionally pranced round the kitchen to Barry White and the Love Unlimited Orchestra after sinking a Babycham at Christmas but that was it. I was slow to get going, even at university. I don't think I'd ever drunk wine when I arrived at Warwick in 1983. I was regularly teased for drinking shandy.

Two things changed all that. First, in the 1990s I became a parent. Second, the wine industry seemed to know I'd need to be bottle-fed through this. Between 1997 and 2001 (when two of my children were born) sales of wine in the UK went up by 27 per cent — to be honest, I think a lot of that was me.

I lived in London at the time and there was a convivial culture among the new parents on our street. The kids played together while we nipped in and out of each other's houses bearing armfuls of Jacob's Creek.

One time several new dads even went on a booze cruise with the children. I can still remember wheeling a French supermarket trolley of wine to my Fiat Panda and thinking, if I'd left Caitlin at home I'd have been able to fit more in.

I also remember Caitlin playing in the garden with her friend Molly. I recall one of them tilting the toy teapot and saying: "Would you like some wine?"

"Yeah, let's get drunk like the grown-ups!" came the response.

I started cutting back after a visit to the doctor in my mid-forties for a bad knee. My GP was on holiday so I got a German locum who said: "Your knee is a symptom of wider issues. Lose weight." That was the whole consultation. This slightly offhand yet holistic prognosis made me think, and I stopped drinking Monday to Thursday.

I also recently underwent a four-week nutritional programme called the Reset. I had to stop drinking altogether, which was hard, although you can reintroduce modest amounts after the four weeks are up. However, when you begin to sleep better and have more energy the allure of booze starts to fade.

Now I see that living for the buzz of that first glass of wine is actually quite debilitating. The younger generation don't seem to need it in the same way. The research data shows that less than 2 per cent of 18 to 29-year-olds drink daily and Caitlin is in that cohort now.

"Where do you get that dopamine hit from if not from booze?" I asked her but she didn't hear me because she was scrolling on her phone.

I was 27 before I met anyone who didn't drink

Harriet Walker, 41

At 41, I'm what's known as a "geriatric millennial", which means I remember life before the internet but have an enormous mortgage — and I am not at all surprised to hear that people my age and older are drinking young people under the table.

When I was at university, booze — specifically, lots of it — was most people's personality type. Many days were a countdown to hitting the pub: white wine with the girls, pints to impress the boys, shots to convince yourself you were still having fun. All our socialising revolved around drinking, whether in pubs, clubs or boozy dinners by the end of which barely anyone could stand up — and that carried on well into our twenties.

I didn't meet anyone who didn't drink until I was 27. I remember it very

the most — Gen Z or boomers?

GARETH IWAN JONES, CHRIS MCANDREW FOR THE TIMES

Clockwise from top left: Michael Odell, Harriet Walker, Ben Pawlowski and Flora Gill

well because he asked me out and I couldn't comprehend the idea of having a teetotal boyfriend so I said no. Not long after that I was accidentally honest to my GP about the number of units I consumed in a week and he handed me a leaflet that said in bubble writing, "Are you an alcoholic?" If I was, then so was literally everyone else I knew. But we weren't drinking alone or in the morning, we just loved "the sesh".

Booze meant fun. It meant letting your hair down, having a laugh, loosening up, a reward after work and a treat on the weekend. When I see bars offering Gen Z ping-pong tables and hook a duck to fill the void of drunken banter, I feel sad that they need a crutch to hang out with each other. Oh, wait.

It wasn't until I cut back — first during pregnancy and the exhaustion of small children, then more recently due to "hangxiety", disrupted sleep and the realisation you can't drink and still have a waistline — that I noticed the effects of drinking so much. Bad skin, puffy face, a bit tubby. Regretting things I'd said or, worse, not remembering. Getting back on an even keel after yet another hangover from hell only to descend once again into the chaos of losing my phone or the entire next day to nausea and shame.

Given people younger than me are already chronically anxious, I understand why many have decided alcohol simply isn't for them. I think I sort of have too, although I allow myself the odd blowout (I swear by Myrkl tablets to survive the next day).

I have so many rules around drinking now: rarely wine and only hyper-pure beer because anything else makes my eczema bad; tequila and soda over anything sugary or my clothes become tight. I tend not to drink at home and try to have at least four days every week without alcohol.

Yet still now, the first cold beer or gin and tonic of the night feels like a big breath out — pure joy, relaxation, the best part of the day. The problem is I've never been very good at stopping — which is why, these days, it's easier not to get started.

Alcohol? It's rare now as hangovers can last a week

Flora Gill, 35

Last week my husband, Adam, and I went to a friend's 35th birthday. Adam moaned in the car that he didn't want to drink but it was our university group and drinking has never really been optional with them.

Once we got to the party in the pub Adam looked around and saw the fellow dads chugging down their second beers and, feeling the pull of social pressure, he followed suit. An hour later, and three pints down, it was his turn to buy the next round. It was only then that he noticed what everyone else was drinking: Heineken 0.0, Birra Moretti Zero, Bero — all non-alcoholic.

This same group used to get blind drunk seven nights a week at uni. But now, in our thirties, it seems things have changed. A few people found wellness, some realised they had drinking problems, but for most of us it's just that we have children and lives that can't be paused for a week of recovery.

Hangovers used to be like cheap one-night stands: a painful goodbye kiss the morning after a fun night. Now they're like a long break-up spanning the better part of a week, spilling into your work and home life. The real issue is that your children don't care how much you drank the night before. They detest lie-ins, have no sympathy for noise control and can smell weakness — the day you really need to take it easy is the day they'll throw their lunch in the toilet and start bobbing for crisps out of the bowl.

I do have lots of mum friends who love a glass of wine at the end of the day. It's the maternal equivalent of taking off your bra when you get home from work — the official marker of the end of "Mum" and the reset of being just you. So I tried being a wine mum for a bit but I just didn't need it; I was as happy with a Magnum (the ice cream kind) in front of the TV watching *Below Deck*.

I've always thought the best time to — now occasionally — drink is with friends. I love the sound of a batch of margaritas being mixed that lets you know you'll be saying, "OK, you have to swear not to tell anyone else, but..." and laughing until the Tubes have closed. Or the moment someone makes the wise decision to skip the glasses and split a bottle of the fanciest-sounding mid-priced wine, which tells you you're past small talk territory. I like the book clubs with booze that imply you can talk about more than what's on the page. And the brunch that goes bottomless and feels like a safe place to vent about the man you're seeing or the child you're raising. Essentially I'm in it for the vibe but, as I realised at that birthday, that vibe can be faked with the pretend stuff too.

For a lot of my friends binge drinking was a marker of our twenties and that's mostly gone, although there is one exception: weddings are the great leveller. Suddenly everyone's back to old habits. For one night, the kids don't exist and the shots are out. Now out of practice, with no tolerance, we all know we'll be paying a hefty price the next morning. But some nights are worth a rotten week, and good memories last longer than bad headaches, even if they're a little blurry.

I'm young but I'm also partial to a pint — or five

Ben Pawlowski, 23

I am Gen Z, which means I'm workshy, never snog, rarely have sex and don't go in for the drinking habits of my elders.

But really? My generation are far from averse to a merry evening in a great British pub.

I've just completed a master's degree in London, where every Wednesday our entire cohort would flock to the watering hole opposite the department to toast a job well done. I have friends in the City for whom a sweaty Thirsty Thursday in a dingy Liverpool Street pub is a non-negotiable part of the week.

But something has changed. I still go out every week but it is more likely to be for a couple of pints with mates than a wild Friday night session. And I'm equally happy watching telly with a glass of wine in hand.

The key is money. At university my friends and I were regulars at Durham nightclubs, fuelled by £2 pints of Bass and £3 VKs. Yet I moved to London a year ago and have only visited the same nightclub in Clapham a grand total of three times. On each occasion I've winced at the £15 entry fee and damn near collapsed in a heap of disbelief at the price of a double vodka orange.

So when my civil servant flatmate told me he was giving up alcohol to save the pennies, I resisted the primal urge to bully him relentlessly. After all, I completely understood his decision, because when most of our ever-more compressed wages (if we can get a job at all) are eaten away by exorbitant rents and unfair student loans, is it any wonder the £8 pints and three-figure nights out are the first things on the chopping block?

The stark truth is that my generation would drink more if things just weren't so crap. Which, paradoxically, is as good a reason as any to get back on it.

fashion

Jacket, £70, shirt, £18, trousers, £40, belt, £16, all marksandspencer.com

Cardigan, £38

Blazer, £65, bag, £30, and brooch, £18.50

Trench, £80, and dress, £42

Clothes worth queueing for — it's

A Chanel-style blazer, luxe faux fur, smart casual tailoring... and all for less than £100. Anna Murphy previews the new season collection at M&S. Here's what you'll be wearing

It says everything about the clout Marks & Spencer is wielding at the moment that when I told a 22-year-old acquaintance of mine that I was going to a preview of the new autumn/winter collection on Tuesday and would be having a chat with Maddy Evans, the woman behind its recent renaissance, she became very excited. "Oooh, I have heard about her," she said. Never, in all the years I have written about M&S, has anyone outside the fashion industry expressed any interest in, or knowledge of, someone working at the brand.

How does that make Evans feel, I ask. "It's pressure," she says, laughing, "but also a privilege. That's what comes with having 13 million womenswear customers."

That pressure is about to scale up, what with the small matter of a catwalk show at London Fashion Week on September 18. "It's a celebration of 100 years of fashion at M&S," says Evans, 53. "London Fashion Week is one of the most prestigious platforms in the UK but we want to make it as accessible as possible so, for example, the vast majority of the shoes and bags in the show will be under £40."

Evans presents, naturally, as the personification of all that's incoming at M&S — more than that, as the personification of how many women want to look right now, which is precisely what lies behind her present success. Her on-point grey blazer (£58, available from October), its lapel fixed closed with a sculptural silver brooch (one of a pair, £18.50, available now), looks more than a little Chanel-y, her Autograph stovepipe jeans (£55, available from October) and her chocolate ballet pumps (£45, available from October) just modernised enough. To quote Gillian Anderson, M&S's so-called chief compliments officer who returns in a second advert for the brand: "Love that."

What else have we got to look forward to? Plenty of tailoring but the kind that presents as relaxed rather than trussed up. Plenty of what Evans calls "light jackets", which most often come in blouson form, but might also be in a Harrington style, and are "up 500 per cent year on year". If you are going to make only one purchase for the new season, I'd advocate for it being one of these. M&S's options have adjustable hems so that the gathering can be tweaked to taste. I like the caramel mock croc (£70, available from Thursday).

Blazer, £58, jumper, £95, and trousers, £35

There's also plenty of what Evans is calling "weatherproofing", which equates to layers that can be millefeuilled up and down depending on temperatures. "It didn't get properly cold until January last winter so we have had to factor that in," she says. "People don't want to buy big coats when it isn't cold. Similarly, we are already thinking about how to play next summer if it is going to be so hot again."

No one has better customer data gathering than M&S and Evans is putting that to good use, not least in her focus on what she calls — look away if you skew pedantic — "smasual", aka smart-casual... "Many of our customers are telling us they are staying in to socialise, either having

Bomber, £65, skirt, £28, and shoes, £28

autumn M&S

friends to theirs or going over to friends. That's why we are doing more day to night than 'out out'."

What this staying in is largely about, of course, is how strapped for cash we are feeling, something that is also affecting customer behaviour. "Thirty pounds and under is the sweet spot," Evans says, "which is why 54 per cent of what we now offer is priced at that level. What we have also found is that customers now have a fixed price threshold. They will have a price range for a particular product and they will absolutely not go above it. So, say, £50 to £150 for a coat."

In other breaking news, brown really is — finally — the new black. "We recently launched a pair of trousers that are selling better in brown than black," she says. "I have never seen anything like it before throughout my entire career in retail." Grey and navy are also shifting well, she adds.

When it comes to denim, the barrel is now outselling every other cut, while elsewhere it's all about contrasting textures, which is why leathers (faux or otherwise) and furs (always faux) feature heavily, offset with silks, satins and woollies (remember those?). I love the multihued faux fur Autograph jacket (£225, available from November) but a white-tipped brown take is a considerably more parsimonious £70 (available now).

Customers are embracing a hybrid working wardrobe: one part for working from home, one part for the office. "And they are telling us they want to feel and look different when they go into the office," Evans says. Hence that aforementioned suiting, my favourite iteration of which is a subtly checked brown double act (£65 for the blazer, £40 for the trousers, available from Thursday).

Flats remain in the ascendant, but people, myself included, still have a soft spot for the kitten heel, apparently. On the subject of which, its distinctive bebuckled kitten slingbacks (£40, available now) are on my wish list, among — as you have probably gathered by now — many other things.

@annagmurphy

Here's what happened when I tried the £420 Dyson toothbrush

It has a camera, but do I need one? By Olivia Petter

Millennial women like me care about our teeth. Friends have splashed the cash on everything from Invisalign braces (£3,000) and veneers (£1,500 a tooth) to implants (£2,500 each) and yes, gum contouring (£2,000 to push back a gummy smile). Why wouldn't we? Selfie culture has rendered our smiles more visible than ever and the bar for what good teeth should look like has never felt so high.

On social media, dental care is everywhere: multistep regimens, tips and tricks for at-home bleaching, guides on oral hygiene. One video of a woman flossing her perfectly white, straight teeth has three million views.

My own routine is complex: I use an electric toothbrush twice a day, rinse with mouthwash, and floss using a combination of tape, TePe brushes and the water flosser my dentist recommended.

Yet it's not enough. If hell exists, it will look like a dentist's office. Sterile, brightly lit and governed by a balding sadist with drills for fingers. In total, I've had five root canals, three emergency gum treatments and so many fillings I've lost count. It's probably cost me well over £6,000.

It's depressing that the beauty regime I've spent the most on is my teeth. And they don't even look nice because none of the dental work I've had has been cosmetic.

So when I heard Dyson was launching a toothbrush, I was intrigued.

In typical Dyson style it's a bit of equipment so technologically sophisticated it feels almost insulting to call it a toothbrush. Oh, and it costs £419.99.

The Dyson CameraJet launches today. But last week I was invited to Dyson HQ for a top-secret first look. Frankly, I'm not sure what to tell you about first. That it took 661 Dyson engineers six years to develop it? That it's got a 100,000-pixel camera just below the brush head, meaning it can detect gaps between your teeth as you use it, triggering a jet burst of mouthwash where you need it? That it's a brush, rinse and floss service all at once — effectively a car wash for your teeth?

"Most people know they should floss, yet very few do it. And brushing alone misses the interdental gaps between teeth, where the problems start," says one of the engineers, Niamh Turney.

The camera, so small I can hardly see it, can scan 28 live images per second to identify and monitor gaps between teeth in real time. The super nerds can connect to an app for a live-viewing feature that enables them to see their teeth through the camera as they brush, so those with time to kill and a thing for endoscope footage can really go to town.

More nerdy info: there's also a conical jet, as opposed to the needle type common in most water flossers including mine, which is more effective at removing plaque. And the "anti-gravity tank", which contains the perfect amount of mouth rinse for a single toothbrushing session (12.5ml, apparently) so you won't "flood the mouth". And the sonic brush head moves nearly 1,000 times per second, with varying bristle types designed to be firm and gentle in all the right places, like any decent lover.

All this was explained to me by Dyson's engineers, who spoke with the enthusiasm of parents talking about their smartest child before handing me a device to try. I was half expecting some sort of minty explosion to take hold of my mouth. But the experience was, in all honesty, not dissimilar from using my regular electric toothbrush, except for the jets, which were more subtle than I had anticipated.

JACK TAYLOR FOR THE TIMES

Olivia Petter

> If hell exists, it will look like a dentist's office

I liked the taste of the mouth rinse (Dyson has made its own alongside a toothpaste in both spearmint and gingermint flavours) and afterwards my mouth felt like it had been deep-cleaned.

If the brush does what Dyson says it does — the company's research claims it removes 69 per cent more plaque in hard-to-reach areas than market-leading premium electric toothbrushes — then using this regularly could, in theory, mean fewer fillings in my future, which I suppose would justify the price tag.

Still, the camera element remains beyond me. I'm not about to start live streaming my toothbrushing. Dyson doesn't actually store the footage, so you'd need another device to film it. But knowing the internet, I suspect some people buying this product will do just that. And I look forward to muting those videos.

fashion

What Galliano's cancelled show really means for Anna Wintour

The retrospective exhibition was intended to mark his comeback — it backfired, says

Harriet Walker

It was supposed to finally lift the curse of the internet's first "cancellation", the crowning moment of a comeback carefully orchestrated over more than a decade by a woman unused to being challenged over who is "in" and who is not.

Yet after the news broke yesterday that the planned retrospective of John Galliano's beautiful and damned career would not go ahead next year at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, it seems that the word of Anna Wintour might no longer be law. The New York Post's Page Six reports that Condé Nast employees are "mortified" and "whispering" about the scandal.

John Galliano: Horizons was announced last month as the Met's 2027 Costume Institute fashion show, making it the focus of the annual fundraising Met Gala next May too. Wintour, 76, is both a chair and trustee as well as a close friend to Galliano, 65, but pressure from the public, politicians and the event's deep-pocketed donors led to the decision on Monday that the exhibition "will not proceed". Another theme will be announced in due time.

The former American Vogue editor and Condé Nast's global editorial director has long championed Galliano despite the events that caused him to be fired from the fashion industry's top job at Dior in 2011. Known for his opulent designs and lavish shows, Galliano was arrested for announcing, "I love Hitler," and making other antisemitic and racist comments to diners in a Paris café. Footage captured on a phone was then posted online.

In his own statement yesterday, Galliano called the planned exhibition "an extraordinary honour" but said that "after much reflection... I have decided, with great sadness, that it is best for it not to take place.

"I remain fully accountable for the pain I caused by my words... to the Jewish and Asian communities and I remain deeply sorry for it. I understand atonement is not achieved through... a single public gesture."

The Met Gala is also known as "the first Monday in May". In 2027 that date coincides with the annual Holocaust Remembrance, Yom HaShoah. Those against the exhibition also pointed to the rise in antisemitic feeling in the city — and around the world — since conflict in the Middle East has escalated in recent years.

John Galliano with Anna Wintour in 2018. Below: with Kim Kardashian in 2024

"Choosing this moment to glorify the life's work of someone convicted of making antisemitic remarks... is bizarre," Galliano's biographer Dana Thomas wrote in The New York Times.

It might seem so to the wider world but, to the influential fashion insiders who have worked to rehabilitate the designer, it will come as a surprise that others do not agree with the redemptive arc they have in mind.

In 2011 Natalie Portman, then the face of Dior's Miss Chérie perfume, said: "As an individual who is proud to be Jewish, I will not be associated with Mr Galliano in any way." For a long time this was the industry line too. Yet there were those working behind the scenes to support a designer they felt had a once-in-a-generation talent and was considered to have been chewed up by a system that required 32 collections a year.

In the immediate aftermath the supermodel Naomi Campbell arranged for a rehab stint to address the addiction to alcohol and prescription medication that Galliano blamed for his behaviour. His first commission post-Dior in 2011 was to make Kate Moss's bias-cut wedding dress, which he created in a month after leaving rehab. It was featured in Vogue, photographed by Mario Testino, who shot him arranging her veil.

Wintour, who had also advocated for Galliano to get his first job at Givenchy in 1995, parlayed her influence into a role for him in the design studio first at Oscar de la Renta in 2013, then as creative director at Maison Margiela in 2014. The man who had taken his Dior catwalk bows dressed as Napoleon and a toreador took the opportunity to mimic that house's diffident Belgian founder, who never showed his face in public.

When I interviewed the director Kevin Macdonald before the release of his 2024 documentary about Galliano, *High & Low*, I asked why he thought Wintour had chosen to help. "It always puzzled me that she decided to expend political capital on John," he said. "Other than thinking he's really talented, what possible reason could she have for risking herself and her company?"

"It isn't often you meet a designer who really changes how women dress or look," Wintour says in that same film, having revealed she used to give Galliano money for food during his church-mouse days. "He was one of them, so we had to help him." Galliano himself said in the film: "It was a disgusting, foul thing that I did."

After ten years at Margiela, he departed with a swansong couture show in January 2024, which US Harper's Bazaar described as "the sort of show he was famous for... before the internet took over". When, at the following May's Met Gala, Zendaya wore two Galliano looks — one vintage Givenchy and one Margiela couture — along with Kim Kardashian and the rapper Bad Bunny, it seemed as though his fashion backers were writing the script for a return. There were rumours that a retrospective had been mooted for that year's theme but abandoned after board members threatened to pull out.

Then, last March, it was announced that Galliano would "re-author" items from Zara's archive for two limited-edition capsules at the high street brand; the first is due to "drop" this month. In the current issue of Vogue, the chair of the Spanish chain's parent company Inditex, Marta Ortega, calls Galliano "the designer I've always admired the most and I'm lucky to be working with him". It seemed as though all taboo around John Galliano was gone — until now.

There is one man who has not spoken out, however, who stands to gain the most and has the ear of many: the man who sacked him, Bernard Arnault of LVMH, for whom a vast archive of fairytale gowns remains unmonetisable while their creator's name is mud. The incumbent at Dior, Jonathan Anderson, posted on Instagram that Galliano had visited the studio before his first couture show in January — something Arnault must have okayed. "At university, [Galliano] was a hero and still is," Anderson said. "And he is [still] Dior in the public imagination."

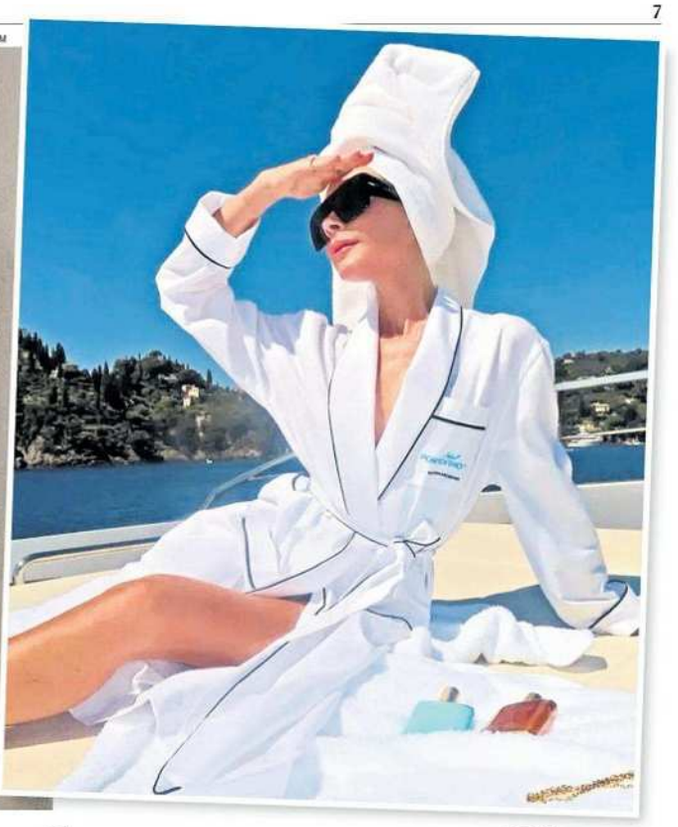
There have also been rumours that the V&A has been planning a Galliano retrospective, although this could now be shelved. Yet the controversy highlights the gap between the fashion world's omnipotence and the appetite for what it is handing down. When it was announced that last year's Met Gala would be "sponsored" by Jeff and Lauren Sánchez Bezos, public opprobrium was swift and relentless.

The extravagant event has teetered on the "bread and circuses" axis for some time now in an era of discontent, wealth inequality and a growing ick around over-consumption. First came the jokey internet memes, then an undeniable sense of how jarring it was.

An entire industry that is supposed to have its ear to the ground appears increasingly tone deaf — and people no longer want to listen. Anna Wintour has led fashion from its trade show days to its billionaire boom, but what will she do next?

@_harrywalkerl

VICTORIA BECKHAM/INSTAGRAM



Finally! Victoria makes a profit

Lady Beckham's fashion house is in the black at last. It's thanks to her make-up line, says Harriet Walker

Watching the World Cup, dancing with David, hanging out with Harper, 15, and cheering on 21-year-old Cruz, who played with his band, the Breakers, at Reading Festival over the bank holiday. This year didn't start well for Victoria Beckham after the public estrangement of her eldest son, Brooklyn, 27, in January. Yet after a family summer spent (on Instagram, at least) "creating special memories", the day before her middle son Romeo's 24th birthday the 52-year-old pop star turned fashion designer and beauty maven announced a career high that may make up for some of the lows.

Last week Beckham posted pictures of herself wearing a long black dress in the Italian resort of Portofino, which she first visited in secret in 1997 when her fledgling relationship with David was still under wraps. This week she followed it not only with her brand's launch of an extrait de parfum, Hotel Portofino, but also the news that her business is finally in the black. When full-year statements are released this week they will show that Victoria Beckham Holdings has increased total revenue by 15 per cent to £129.8 million in 2025, up from 2024's £112.7 million. Last year also marks the company's first year of operating profit: £7.3 million after losing £1.6 million in 2024.

It's a milestone moment for the brand, which launched in 2008 with a show of only ten dresses in a New York hotel suite. By 2022 it was reported that the company was £53.9 million in debt. In a Netflix series last October Beckham admitted she had been "tens of millions in the red" and bailed out by David.

"I used to cry before I went to work every day because I felt like a firefighter," Beckham said then. "If he hadn't believed in me, I wouldn't still have a business now."

When Victoria Beckham sold 30 per cent of the company to NEO Investment Partners for £30 million in 2017, the venture capital firm's founder, David Belhassen, became chair and began a restructure. That involved slashing costs, such as the £85,000 a year spent on office plants. Last year marked the arrival of Sybille Darricarrère Lunel as chief executive of fashion from Christian Dior Couture, and the promotion of Lauren Edelman to chief executive of the beauty side of the business. Both are in their early forties.

It has taken the VB brand nearly 20 years to wash its face, and it is luxury skincare that looks to have done the job, over and above the clothes Beckham shows in Paris twice a year. The company does not distinguish between sales in its fashion arm and the beauty line it launched in 2019 but 2024 results indicate that two thirds of Beckham's sales come from the latter.

Beckham says that one of its £33 Satin Kajal eyeliner pencils sells every 30 seconds. Last September the company launched its £104 Foundation Drops — glossy lightweight coverage enhanced with serum tech from the award-winning German biomedical scientist and cult beauty name Professor Augustinus Bader — which promptly sold out. In April a new £44 bronzer shade of Beckham's Colour Wash water tint went the same way. On a recent visit to Beckham's Dover Street boutique in London, it was this that shoppers were looking for rather than the £990 dresses — although it is no small coup that Andy Burnham's wife, Marie-France van Heel, wore one to arrive at Downing Street in July.

Above left: David and Victoria Beckham with their sons Romeo and Cruz and daughter, Harper, in Paris last year. Above right: Victoria launching her new perfume in Portofino

> **"She's always been more of an icon in beauty than fashion**

"There's a reason there's a waiting list for the Foundation Drops," says The Times Luxx's beauty editor Lesley Thomas. "They're expensive but they're brilliant."

"It's no secret that the Foundation Drops massively turned things around," says Joanna Ellner, a former beauty editor and founder of the skincare brand Reome. "The coverage is unlike anything else I've tried and Lauren Edelman is an absolute force within the beauty industry."

The New Yorker was previously at Chanel and L'Oréal, and it seems her plan for Victoria Beckham beauty is to make it, as Ellner says, "Estée Lauder for the modern age". That means effective science-backed formulas in upmarket packaging and cult products with mass appeal at prices that are just about in reach and easier to justify given they're daily-use items.

The beauty journalist Nadine Baggott believes the name on the bottle is worth more than the product inside, however. "I've had a lot of messages asking whether they are worth over £100. My answer is no, but if you buy into Brand Beckham, you will be blind to that fact," she says.

The beauty side of the business certainly does better out of VB's fame than in the notoriously snooty fashion arena. Beauty is a means of imitating a certain A-list gloss that Beckham embodies, and her Instagram videos, often done in the bathroom mirror with a towel on her head, have wider appeal than her catwalk shows.

"She's always been more of an icon in beauty than fashion," Ellner says. "She's been doing that smoky eye for decades, she knows every trick in the book."

Beckham knows too, of course, how to market her own pop culture status to leverage fascination with her clan. Those latest holiday snaps featured David in his swimmers (always a guaranteed hit) and Harper's noticeably glossy summer skin, after the announcement in July that the youngest Beckham would also be launching a cosmetics brand, targeting her own Gen Alpha age group, expected next year.

Indeed, interest in the Beckhams is at an all-time high after Brooklyn asserted in his own posts in January that "my family values public promotion and endorsements above all else". He then appeared in an advert for the food delivery service DoorDash during the World Cup that showed him watching the matches alone the week after his sister was photographed delivering a letter to his home, doorbell unanswered. Brooklyn claimed the visits had been "choreographed" for the paparazzi.

Who does it remind you of, this family split from an errant son — and his American wife, Nicola Peltz — no longer willing to play the game but also attempting to win it on his own terms? Insiders at the Palace and Brand Beckham have suggested it is no coincidence that the Princess of Wales wore a VB trouser suit for an appearance in May last year, after a particularly bruising run of headlines about the feud with Brooklyn and Peltz.

Next up for Beckham will be her Paris Fashion Week show on October 2, which usually generates more pictures of her family seated next to Vogue's Anna Wintour on the front row than of the clothes. Brooklyn has not attended one since September 2024 — but the latest business figures may help Queen Victoria to celebrate the end of her own annus horribilis.

Would you use LinkedIn for dating? I do

The business networking site is the new romance source, says Esme Gordon-Craig

ANDREW FOX FOR THE TIMES

Esme Gordon-Craig

I was midway through a week's work experience when I realised I had an embarrassingly large crush on one of my colleagues. I wanted to ask for his Instagram but the open-plan layout of the office didn't exactly inspire romance or casual chitchat. So when Friday rolled around, I left disappointed, knowing nothing but his first name and job title, and wondering whether I'd see my work crush again.

Which, of course, I did. Because, luckily for me, us singletons have a new dating tool at our disposal: LinkedIn. With the little information I had I was able to find his account and request to connect. I messaged asking if he wanted to go for a coffee, saying I'd love to learn more about his career (not a complete lie). He said yes, sent me his number and soon we were at the pub, in agreement that this "chat" was far more pleasure than it was business.

Embarrassing, maybe. But it worked!

This is LinkedIn dating, the latest approach to finding love for desperate digital natives. Using the app for romantic reasons as opposed to professional ones is risky considering LinkedIn can ban anyone caught doing so, yet it doesn't seem to be putting people off.

Research has shown that one in four US LinkedIn users believe using the professional networking site as a dating tool can be acceptable. And no generation is benefiting more from modern dating's most recent update than Gen Z.

"I sort of expected him to ask for my number but instead he said, 'What's your LinkedIn?'" says Sarah, 24, who was recently asked out by a guy on the app. The next morning she had a notification saying he'd added her and soon they were messaging on the app and setting up their first date. If this seems inappropriate, it's because it is. However, if done correctly (no flirting until you've switched to WhatsApp), dating using LinkedIn can be effective.

"It gets the foundational requirements out of the way, like jobs, schooling and hobbies, so when you end up going on a date you actually get to know the person outside of those things," Nathalie*, 25, says.

It's particularly useful to those of us still working from home, who are deprived of the office banter and work parties that so often lead to relationships. "Most of my networking happens on LinkedIn," Emily*, 25, says. "I have ended up fancying guys who I meet on the app and once even dating one. It's kind of like my substitute for the after-work drinks."

For me it's about avoiding the pressure of a first date. Unlike Hinge or Bumble dates, when I met the guy from my work experience I was relaxed knowing that if there wasn't a spark, it didn't matter because it wasn't actually a date. Worst case scenario it would be a good networking opportunity.

> **Our lack of a sex life has become a national crisis**

Then there's the role LinkedIn plays in kicking off our relationships. "My housemates looked up my boyfriend on LinkedIn before our first Hinge date," Tilly*, 23, says. "I had to pretend I didn't know his full name, where he went to school and university or anything about his job."

LinkedIn provides more than enough information to reassure us that the stranger we're about to go drinking with is a real person, while satisfying our desire to be nosy.

"Make sure you check your privacy settings first, though," Emily says. "I once stalked a guy I met at a party only to learn he got a notification saying I'd checked his profile. He sent a screenshot to my friend along with the message 'lol'. I was mortified."

With YouGov reporting that one third of 18 to 29-year-olds have never been in a relationship, our lack of a sex life has gone from being a national joke to a national crisis. Clearly a new tactic is needed. Unfortunately for me, my attempt at LinkedIn dating failed. Turns out I fancied him only in the very dull context of my work experience. But this doesn't mean LinkedIn dating doesn't work. Despite what the statistics may suggest, my generation are on a mission to find love — and we mean business.

Names have been changed

Boots
PrescriptionsPlus
FREE delivery
TRACK by text* or online
EXPERT pharmacist advice
NHS
Providing NHS services
Loved by our online customers**
Boots
With you. For life.
in store | boots.com | app
For patients registered with participating GP surgeries. Prescription charges may apply. Order via boots.com for free delivery via Royal Mail in England only & online tracking. Subject to availability. *Sign up to text messaging service required. **Rating from boots.com, average rating 4.5 captured 9 December 2025.

JESS LITTLEWOOD

Bayeux boom: get stitching and embrace the new age of craft

As audiences besiege the British Museum to see the famous tapestry, more of us are swapping our phones for needle and thread, says Laura Freeman

Last week, I found myself possessed by the spirit of Maria von Trapp. My older daughter wanted a painting apron and my younger daughter wants whatever the older one has. Remembering that I had a metre of chintz leftover from when we had curtains made to hide the washing machine and tumble dryer, I cut and hemmed two little aprons and sewed on ribbons for ties. They go adorably with the utility room.

I'm no great seamstress and my running stitch rarely sticks to the track but with each year that passes and each new incursion of technology (do I really need a doorbell app?), the more I want to know how to make things. My grandmother could knit; my step-grandmother was a superb embroideress; my mother, before she had children, used to make clothes from Vogue patterns and Liberty fabrics. I am inept but enthusiastic. And there's something in the air: a new arts and crafts revival.

Even allowing for the fact that the algorithm gives you more of what it thinks you fancy, my Instagram feed is unusually full of weavers, quilters, cross-stitchers and creatively decorative darners. If the Bayeux Tapestry's presence on British shores for the first time in almost a thousand years doesn't inspire you to pick up a needle, I don't know what will. For some, the biggest art event this October is Frieze; for others it's the Knit + Stitch craft fair at Alexandra Palace.

This month, The New York Times ran a piece on what it called "hobbyamory". Think "polyamory" but for hobbies. Gen Z and younger millennials apparently don't drink, but they do craft. Promiscuously. Crochet on Monday, weaving on Tuesday, pottery on Wednesday, cyanotype-printing on Thursday. On TikTok #hobbymaxxing is now a thing — in America so far this year the number of posts tagged #grandmahobbies has increased by more than 400 per cent compared with the same period last year.

If you are a grandmother who has been "hobbymaxxing" for decades without knowing it and are currently rolling your eyes, well, you have to admit it's better than joyriding or make-up unboxing.

What, I asked three artists working in the field of modern crafts, is going on? "I think we're cyclical, aren't we?" says Nancy Nicholson, a Cumbrian textile artist now based in North Devon. "The arts and crafts movement happened in response to the Industrial Revolution. We are now at the beginning of an AI revolution."

Nicholson came to weaving almost by chance. She was working as a set designer when the call came for a loom that would sit on stage and look as though it actually worked. The prop loom sent Nicholson down "a rabbit hole". "It was the first time I realised how much of a piece of engineering a loom is, how fundamental yet how complex."

She later worked at a gallery dealing in Aubusson rugs made to designs by artists such as Alexander Calder and Joan Miró. "I became more and more interested until eventually I jumped off a bit of a cliff and bought a massive floor loom." She now weaves graceful modernist rugs and tapestries that marry crisply cool geometry with the warmth of earthy dyed and undyed colours.

Jessica Littlewood, a textile artist, has also noticed how crafts offer an alternative to the creep of tech. She makes quilts and three-dimensional quilted sculptures, and also works with schools. Littlewood has noticed that when she gives children an embroidery hoop, they readily take to it. "There is something about that little sewing space that is quite similar to that scrolling space. You can swap it out. They're really familiar with having something in their lap or in their hand and doing a repetitive action."

Left: rag works by Monica Grose-Hodge. Top: Jessica Littlewood stitching one of her textile cabbages

Stop scrolling, start stitching.

If you visited the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition this year, you will have seen one of Littlewood's works in the first room: a stitched and quilted, oversized, lush-leaved green cabbage. It was delightfully absurd and beautiful in its detail. So how did she get into... er... cabbages?

Since attending Saint Martin's School of Art, Littlewood had worked with collage and drawing but when her children were small, she found herself with only "tiny windows of time". Quilting could be quickly got out and tidied away. "I could do a bit of it while a baby was sleeping."

She learnt to sew with her grandmother, but feels strongly that anyone can take up textiles at any time of life. "We understand so much more than we think we know. Textiles are around us all the time. Literally, you have a baby and before you know it someone has stuck a knitted hat on their head."

Littlewood had never made anything in three dimensions before, but setting out to make quilted leaves she found a cabbage beginning to reveal itself. A new cabbage — even bigger and this time purple — has been chosen as the cover star of next month's copy of Embroidery magazine. (Headline: "Top of the crops".)

When I contact Monica Grose-Hodge, another textile artist, I hesitate over what to call her works — "rag rugs" sounds a bit undignified for pieces so sumptuous and intricate. "I do like calling them rag rugs," she says on the phone from her central London studio, "I want to highlight what you can make from recycled materials." There are various ways to make a rag rug, she says, with some giving a shaggier effect than others, but perhaps the most common is by pulling or hooking thin strips of fabric through a hessian backing.

Grose-Hodge, who for 14 years was the secretary of the Art Workers' Guild, the society for artists and craftsmen founded by William Morris and based in Bloomsbury, started experimenting in lockdown to "keep me from boredom" and because "I just loved the idea of turning something that you would throw away, something ugly, into something beautiful".

Her pieces have evolved into richly intricate and lustrous wall hangings which owe more to the forms of Jacobean crewel work than to simple fireside rugs. A true rag rug might use fabric that was well past the rag stage, but Grose-Hodge also uses strips of silk and embroidered

> **"I'm not neat or precise. I just love making things**

fabrics. She warmed to the freedom of rag rugs.

"One of the great things as a more mature person coming to choose a creative outlet is that you know your strengths, and I've always liked large scale. I'm not neat. I'm not precise. I'm not mathematical. Weaving is out, cross-stitching is out. I also just love making something in an age where so much is virtual and non-tactile. I suppose I love materials, so working with them is really satisfying. You also have a sense of achievement. I think that sense is underrated. It's lovely to finish something."

Platforms such as TikTok, Instagram and X, on the other hand, are designed to be infinite; you never finish and you are never ever satisfied.

Some of Grose-Hodge's pieces really are made from scraps, samples and offcuts; some are more personal. "My great aunt Brenda, who lived to 104, had kept her satin nighties, which must have come from the Thirties. She had darned them so carefully. They had frayed away and she had done tiny darning stitches. Of course I was never going to wear them, but I'd held on to them for 30 or 40 years and so I reused them in a piece."

For both sentimental and environmental reasons, I hate the thought of my daughters' old babygros, worn to threads, feet cut off for growth spurts, ending up on a clothes mountain in Ghana. One of these days, I plan to turn them into a quilt.

While watching tutorials on Instagram (it's not all bad), I came across the very sound advice *not* to start with a double bedspread but with something that would go in a doll's cot. After all, even the noblewomen or possibly nuns who sewed the 70m-long Bayeux Tapestry must have started with the simplest of samplers.

times2

Your weekday brain boost

More puzzles
Pages 14-16

Every day, Monday to Thursday, a page of extra puzzles to give your brain an extended workout

Samurai difficult

Fill each grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Where the puzzles overlap, the rows and columns do not go beyond their usual length.

7			9		5			
		8	1 5		7			
		1		6	2 9			
4		2						
		9 7	4	1	5 3 6			
					2			
2	3		5					
	7		6	3				
	5		8		3			

			2	9	3	7		
1	6			7		9		
				5	4	2	1	
		9		4	2			
7	3					4	2	
			7	9		6		

			7	6				
4	8			1 8				
					1			
		7		4	2			
8	2		3 9		1	3 7		
9	5 8		7					
1		6 2	5 1 8			8 6		

			5 1					
		9						
		2						
			3		1 9 7			
			5		3	8 3	4	6
			7	5		6		4
				4 1	1 5	3	7	9

Sudoku easy

							6	
					2			1
	3	2	4		1			
		6	2	1	8	5	9	
	2	7		6	5			
1					7	2		
				2	3	1		
7				8		6		
	5		7					

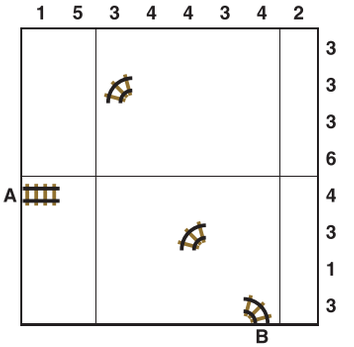
Killer gentle

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

29	12	9			24			7
		3	7	17	6		8	
	4				13		21	
		14	7		9			
6	18				21		13	
		16	12			24	4	
4			14		3		6	
	13		24	8				13
8					8			

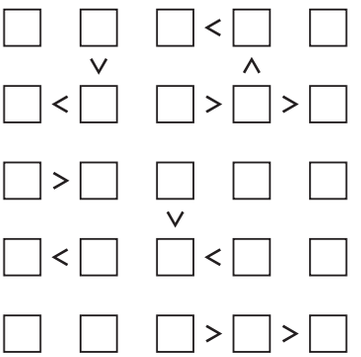
Train Tracks

Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

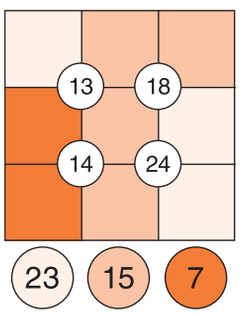


Futoshiki

Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.



Sakuro

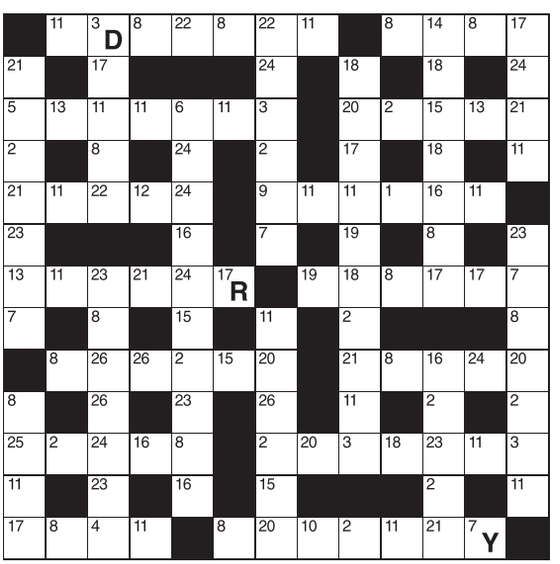


Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

Play Mini Sudoku every day Monday-Sunday online at thetimes.com and on Live app

Codeword

Every letter in the crossword-style grid, right, is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded.



A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1	2	3 D	4	5	6	7 Y	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17 R	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Mini Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x2 box contains the digits 1 to 6

Solutions in tomorrow's Times2

3					5
	5			4	
		1	2		
		5	1		
	1			2	
2					1

Yesterday's solutions

SAMURAI

9	1	2	8	4	7	5	3	6
7	4	6	5	3	2	9	1	8
8	5	3	9	1	6	7	2	4
4	6	9	3	8	5	2	7	1
5	2	8	7	6	1	4	9	3
1	3	7	2	9	4	8	6	5
2	9	1	6	5	3	1	4	7
6	7	4	1	2	8	3	5	9
3	8	5	4	7	9	6	8	2

4	1	9	7	6	5	3	8	2
3	5	2	8	4	1	6	9	7
6	7	8	9	3	2	5	1	4
5	3	6	4	7	8	1	2	9
7	9	4	2	1	6	8	3	5
8	2	1	3	5	9	7	4	6
1	2	7	5	9	3	2	6	8
9	4	5	6	8	7	4	5	1
2	6	8	9	3	1	5	7	4

1	2	9	6	8	5	7	3	4
6	4	5	7	3	1	2	9	8
3	8	7	4	9	2	6	1	5
8	1	2	3	5	9	4	7	6
9	5	4	2	6	7	3	8	1
7	3	6	1	4	8	9	5	2
2	6	8	9	1	3	5	4	7
4	9	3	5	7	6	8	2	1
5	7	1	8	2	4	3	6	9

5	3	6	2	8	4	1	9	7
8	2	1	7	9	5	3	4	6
4	7	9	3	1	6	2	5	8
9	6	4	5	2	8	7	3	1
1	5	3	9	7	2	8	6	4
2	8	7	6	4	3	5	1	9
6	4	5	8	3	9	1	7	2
7	1	8	4	6	7	9	2	5
3	9	2	1	5	1	4	8	3

SUDOKU

5	4	7	1	6	8	2	9	3
1	8	9	3	5	2	4	7	6
3	2	6	9	7	4	5	8	1
2	6	8	7	4	9	3	1	5
7	9	1	2	3	5	8	6	4
4	3	5	8	1	6	7	2	9
8	5	2	6	9	3	1	4	7
9	7	4	5	2	1	6	3	8
6	1	3	4	8	7	9	5	2

KILLER

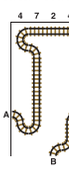
2	7	3	8	4	6	1	5	9
5	1	8	3	9	7	2	4	6
9	4	6	2	5	1	8	3	7
3	8	2	4	1	9	7	6	5
6	9	4	5	7	8	3	1	2
1	5	7	6	3	2	4	9	8
8	2	1	9	6	4	5	7	3
4	6	5	7	8	3	9	2	1
7	3	9	1	2	5	6	8	4

SAKURO

MINI SUDOKU

4	5	1	6	2	3
3	2	6	5	4	1
1	3	2	4	5	6
5	6	4	3	1	2
6	1	5	2	3	4
2	4	3	1	6	5

TRAIN TRACKS



FUTOSHIKI

5	2	3	4	1
2	1	5	3	4
1	5	4	2	3
3	4	1	5	2
4	3	2	1	5

CODEWORD

R	O	V	E	■	C	R	O	S	S	B	O	W
E	■	I	■	Z	■	H	■	H	A	■	I
J	U	S	T	I	F	Y	■	O	W	N	E	D
I	■	T	■	T	■	W	O	■	E
G	R	A	P	H	■	H	O	N	O	U	R
G	■	E	■	M	■	■	E	E
E	F	F	O	R	T	■	S	Y	N	T	A	X
D	■	L	■	■	B	■	E	■	■	E
■	N	A	U	S	E	A	■	A	T	T	I	C
S	■	V	■	I	■	R	■	R	■	W	■	U
C	H	O	I	R	■	B	O	L	D	E	S	T
U	■	U	■	E	■	E	■	Y	■	A	■	E
M	A	R	I	N	A	D	E	■	S	K	T	D

To sum up: we have a flawed justice system

James Jackson
TV review

The Jury
Channel 4
★★★☆☆

Jury trials are under threat — from Channel 4. Again. *The Jury* is back for its third series like some annual campaign to prove that handing the fate of someone's life to 12 random people is as outdated as Horace Rumpole's wig.

Again we have a genuine murder trial restaged by actors — this time two brothers, one 14, the other 23, are accused of murdering their stepfather — the subjects of the experiment being the individuals who have signed up to be the jury. The question driving *The Jury: 14 and on Trial for Murder* is whether they'll reach the same verdict as the jury in the actual trial.

That remains a clever format, combining reality TV with our love of a good courtroom mystery, even if, as an exposé of how random personal biases affect a jury's verdict, the series has already argued its case well.

The case this time isn't whether or not 14-year-old Daniel and the older Luke killed their stepfather with a breadknife in the neck as he slept, rather whether there is diminished responsibility. That would mean manslaughter, not murder, and much of the trial comes down to whether mental health issues like depression and "loss of control" are a defence. (For this critic, it's rather hard to excuse anyone who calmly almost hacks the head off a person as they sleep.)

Almost straight away the jurors were disagreeing. "Daniel looks so angelic, he looks so sweet I just want to cuddle him!" one said. "Guilty — 100 per cent!" another declared. "I'm really stubborn with my opinion... I can listen but it don't mean I need to take it in."

A heavily tattooed 46-year-old hairdresser was a particularly dominant voice, arguing for leniency towards a 14-year-old child, his view apparently given weight when the dead stepfather was painted as a wifebeater.

As usual, all were soon talking to camera in cutaway interviews, getting teary as they opened up about their own backstories — *Big Brother*'s diary room in the courthouse. You wonder why they want to take part in the show; they must feel very strongly about our justice system. Certainly, their candour shows how jurors walk into a trial with very different life experiences and thus their own preloaded views.

Whether or not jurors actually do sit around chatting about the case during trial breaks (I've not been on a jury but I believe they don't), there is still something here in watching the psychology at play, however manufactured it may be. By the later deliberations one juror, making some sensible observations, is being talked over by those with the loudest voices. Some individuals become very harrumphy when others don't agree with them, like a microcosm of today's society.

All this squabbling back and forth becomes a bit repetitive and we still don't get to hear the judge's summing up. But know that, by the magic of TV, the final deliberation goes right down to the wire, giving us a cliffhanger just before the court rises to hear the verdicts.

To sum up, *The Jury* is still effective in demonstrating the flaws of our jury system but by now the absence of any insight into how an alternative could work feels glaring. And with its point already made, the series is as much about demonstrating simply how annoying people can be with each other, like all reality TV.

MATTHEW MCQUILLAN

Oliver Shaw as Daniel Burwick, a 14-year-old accused of murder

Radio choice

Archive on 4
Radio 4 Extra,10am

Freddie Mercury would have celebrated his 80th birthday on September 5 this year and in this programme, *Mercury*, from 2021, the Times writer Sathnam Sanghera looks at the life of the Queen frontman, *above*. There are archive interviews with the band at their career-changing Live Aid performance, and Sanghera talks to Farouk Topan, a contemporary of Mercury's from his birthplace of Zanzibar, to find out what the life of the young Farrokh Bulsara — Mercury's birth name — would have been like there. He also talks to the Queen super-fan Matt Lucas and to the biographer Lesley-Ann Jones.
Clair Woodward

Times Radio
Digital, web, smart speaker, app
5.00am Cara Bentley **6.00** Kate McCann and Stig Abell with Breakfast **10.00** Hugo Rifkind **1.00pm** Jo Coburn **2.00** Jane Garvey and Fi Glover **4.00** John Pienaar with Drive **7.00** The Evening Edition with Kait Borsay **10.00** Carole Walker **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

Radio 2
FM: 88-90.2 MHz
6.30am The Sara Cox Breakfast Show **9.30** Vernon Kay **12.00** Tina Daheley **2.00pm** DJ Spoony **4.00** Drivetime **7.00** Jo Whiley **9.00** The Folk Show with Mark Radcliffe **10.00** The Good Groove with Melvin Odoom **12.00** OJ Borg **3.00am** Alternative Sounds of the 90s with Dermot O'Leary (r) **4.00** Owain Wyn Evans

Radio 3
FM: 90.2-92.4 MHz
6.30am Breakfast
9.30 Essential Classics
1.00pm Classical Live
Highlights from the Proms, the Montpellier Festival and the International Baroque Festival. BBC Proms: Mahler (*Rückert-Lieder*); Montpellier Festival: Mendelssohn (Excerpts from *Songs without Words* — Adagio, Op 53/4, Allegro di molto, Op 30/2, Presto agitato, Op 53/3 and Allegro non troppo, Op 38/2); International Baroque Festival, Beaune: Scarlatti (*Salve Regina*) and BBC Proms: Mahler (Symphony No 4 in G)
3.00 Choral Evensong
An edition from Edington Priory Church during Edington Festival of Music within the Liturgy
4.00 Composer of the Week: Elisabeth Jacquet de La Guerre (1665-1729)
Kate Molleson looks at how Jacquet de La Guerre came to create the first performed opera written by a woman in France (r)
5.00 In Tune
6.30 Live BBC Proms
Kate Molleson presents as Kirill Petrenko conducts the Berlin Philharmonic at the Royal Albert Hall, London. Elgar (*Enigma Variations*) and Tchaikovsky (Symphony No 4 in F minor)
8.30 New Generation Artists
Performances by Radio 3 New Generation Artists the NOVO Quartet and the pianist Lukas Sternath. Smetana (String Quartet No 1 in E minor — *From my life*); Liszt (*Funérailles* S 173 No 7 — 1849) and Schubert (Piano Sonata in B flat, D.960 —1828)
10.15 Live BBC Proms
Hannah French presents as the Gesualdo Six and Colin Currie Group perform choral music at the Royal Albert Hall, London. Machaut (*Messe de Nostre Dame — Kyrie*); Pérotin (*Beata viscera*); Ockeghem (*Motet — Intemerata Dei mater*); Hildegard von Bingen (*Symphony of the Harmony of Heavenly Revelations — O orzchis Ecclesia*); Dunstable (*Veni sancte spiritus/Veni creator spiritus*). Traditional, arr. Owain Park (*Phos hilaron — Hail, gladdening light*); Prez (*O virgo prudentissima*) and Steve Reich (*Tehillim*)
11.45 'Round Midnight
12.30am Through the Night

Radio 4
FM: 92.4-94.6 MHz
5.00am News Summary
5.04 Yesterday in Parliament
5.34 Shipping Forecast
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Farming Today
6.00 Today
9.00 Sideways (8/8)
9.30 Breakin' the Cycle (6/6)
10.00 Woman's Hour
11.00 Medical Emergency (r)
11.40 This Week in History
Beatrix Potter writes the first Peter Rabbit story
11.45 You Do Not Have to Say Anything (3/10) (r)
12.04pm You and Yours
1.00 The World at One
1.45 A 9/11 Story
FBI Special Agent Danny Gonzalez chases leads in San Diego (3/10)
2.00 The Archers (r)
2.15 Drama: Broken Colours By Matthew Broughton (2/5) (r)
3.00 Money Box (1/8)
3.30 Glasgow: Satellite City
How the city has transformed itself into Europe's largest producer of small satellites
4.00 NatureBang (5/5) (r)
4.15 The Media Show
5.00 PM
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Best Medicine (6/6)
7.00 The Archers
Natasha hatches a plan
7.15 Front Row
Discussion on Jane Austen (r)
8.00 The Moral Maze (3/6)
9.00 Invisible Hands
David Dimbleby tells the story of Pat Buchanan (6/6) (r)
9.30 Michael Sheen Gets into Character
Michael finds out what it is like to be a young actor today (3/3) (r)
10.00 The World Tonight
10.45 Book at Bedtime: A Working Mother (3/5)
11.00 Nora Meadows' Week of Wellness (3/6) (r)
11.15 The Skewer (1/5)
11.30 Today in Parliament
12.00 News and Weather
12.30am You Do Not Have to Say Anything (3/10) (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

Radio 4 Extra
Digital only
8.00am You Heard It Here First **8.30** Flush **8.45** The Offing **9.00** Best Medicine **9.30** The Secret History of a School **9.45** Daily Service **10.00** Choice Mercury. Sathnam Sanghera discusses Freddie Mercury's racial and sexual identity **11.00** Five Red Herrings **11.30** Kill the Pharaoh! **12.00** Men of Intelligence **12.30pm** The Missing Hancocks **1.00** You Heard It Here First **1.30** Flush **1.45** The Offing **2.00** The Ultimate Choice **2.30** Getting Nowhere Fast **3.00** Conversation from the Engine Room **4.00** Mercury **5.00** Five Red Herrings **5.30** Kill the Pharaoh! **6.00** Men of Intelligence **6.30** The Missing Hancocks **7.00** You Heard It Here First **7.30** Flush **7.45** The Offing **8.00** The Ultimate Choice **8.30** Getting Nowhere Fast **9.00** Conversation from the Engine Room **10.00** Comedy Club: Best Medicine **10.30** Delve Special **11.00** Welcome to Wherever You Are **11.30** Lucy Porter's Lucky Dip

Radio 5 Live
MW: 693, 909
5.00am Wake Up to Money **6.00** 5 Live Breakfast **9.00** Nicky Campbell **11.00** Naga Munchetty **2.00pm** Matt Chorley **4.00** 5 Live Drive **7.00** 5 Live Sport. Coverage of this evening's fixtures in the Championship and Scottish Premiership **10.30** Gordon Smart **1.00am** Dotun Adebayo

talkSPORT
MW: 1053, 1089 kHz
5.00am Early Sports Breakfast **6.00** Breakfast with Alan Brazil **10.00** Jim White and Simon Jordan **1.00pm** Max Rushden & Charlie Baker **4.00** talkSPORT Drive **7.00** Kick Off **10.00** The Sports Bar **1.00am** Extra Time with Paul Ross

Talk
Digital only
6.00am Jeremy Kyle **10.00** Julia Hartley Brewer **1.00pm** Ian Collins **4.00** Kevin O'Sullivan **7.00** Peter Cardwell **10.00** Petrie Hosken **1.00am** Paul Ross

6 Music
Digital only
5.00am Amy Lamé **7.00** Nemone **10.00** Lauren Laverne **1.00pm** Craig Charles **4.00** Huw Stephens **7.00** New Music Fix Daily **9.00** Riley & Coe **11.00** 6 Music Artist in Residence **12.00** Freak Zone Playlist **1.00am** My Top Twelve: Cass Elliot **2.00** My Top Twelve: Joni Mitchell **3.00** 6 Music Live Hour **4.00** 6 Music's Jukebox

Virgin Radio
Digital only
6.30am The Chris Evans Breakfast Show **10.00** Emma B **2.00pm** Ben Jones **6.00** Geoff Lloyd **10.00** Goldierocks **2.00am** Steve Denyer

Classic FM
FM: 100-102 MHz
6.30am Dan Walker **9.00** The Hall of Fame Hour **10.00** Aled Jones **1.00pm** Anne-Marie Minhall **4.00** Margherita Taylor **7.00** Relaxing Evenings with Zeb Soanes **10.00** Calm Classics **1.00am** Bill Overton **4.00** Early Breakfast

television

PICKS OF THE DAY

Stolen Babies
BBC2, 9pm

In July Keir Starmer apologised to the estimated 185,000 unmarried women who had their babies taken from them between 1949 and 1976. "The shame was ours," he told the campaigning mothers and adoptees gathered at the Houses of Parliament. This documentary tells a story of cruelty, abuse and misogyny, largely through the testimony of women who had their children removed from them. "I didn't give up for adoption," says Ann of her son. "He was taken, and he was taken by the state." Vulnerable teenagers were subjected to punitive moral judgment, marked as "sinners" by church and family and treated harshly even in labour, before their babies were delivered to "nice" middle-class families in a thriving adoption industry. There are moments of redemption, but this is an enraging account of a brutal injustice. **Victoria Segal**

Ann Keen was reunited with her son Mark Lloyd Fox in 1995

The Repair Shop: Beyond the Barn
BBC 1, 8pm

In a new spin-off series, *Repair Shop* regulars visit clients at home to find out how mementoes are "put to use" after we watched them being mended. This compilation showcases a replica of a *Doctor Who* robot, a cowboy hat worn by a member of the first 1970s glam band, a bag owned by Churchill's cook and more. Dom Chinea, Will Kirk and Suzie Fletcher are on duty. **John Dugdale**

Bookish
U&Alibi, 8pm/9.10pm

Tonight's double bill airs both legs of a two-part mystery that starts with a man lying dead in a tailor's shop. Although the 75-year-old tailor (Allan Corduner) confesses to murder, Book (Mark Gatiss) is sceptical, but he is initially at a loss to provide a better explanation in a fun conspiracy caper featuring a

BBC1

6.00am Breakfast
9.30 Morning Live
10.45 Rip Off Britain
11.30 Homes Under the Hammer (r) (AD)
12.15pm Bargain Hunt (r) (AD)
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather
1.35 BBC Regional News; Weather
1.45 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 Money for Nothing. A salvage expert has a loo-roll-inspired idea for a set of wooden golf clubs, but he cannot stop there, and the ideas just keep coming
2.45 Escape to the Country. A couple want a location in the Cotswolds with dog walks on their doorstep and decent dining options (r)
3.45 Garden Rescue. Flo Headlam and Diarmuid Gavin are in Powys to help a mum and daughter tackle their uninspired garden
4.30 The Answer Run. Fast-paced quiz (r)
5.15 Pointless. Quiz series hosted by Alexander Armstrong and Susan Wokoma
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather

7.00 The One Show Weekday magazine with Alex Jones and JB Gill

7.30 EastEnders Nicola has a change of heart and offers an olive branch, while a power cut threatens Linda's event at the Community Centre (AD)

8.00 The Repair Shop: Beyond the Barn New series. The experts revisit people who have been reunited with cherished mementos, including the story of a well-worn cowboy hat with a connection to a famous rock star. *See picks of the day* (1/8) (AD)

9.00 Celebrity MasterChef Sue Cleaver, Melvin Odoom, Una Healy, Lauren Steadman and Max Fosh serve up a dish using a mystery ingredient and cook the ultimate takeaway for YouTube star Angry Ginge. Grace Dent and Giorgio Locatelli are on hand to judge their efforts (AD)

10.00 BBC News at Ten

10.30 BBC Regional News and Weather

10.40 Reading Festival Highlights A taste of last weekend's festival, which saw chart stars including Charli XCX, Florence and the Machine, Fontaines DC and Raye gather for three days of music

11.40 The Hit List Featuring teams hailing from Northern Ireland, Liverpool, London and Birmingham (6/9) (r)

12.30am-6.00 BBC News

BBC2

6.30am Bargain Hunt (r) (AD)
7.15 Money for Nothing (r)
8.00 Sign Zone: Great Continental Railway Journeys. Exploring Belgium (r) (AD, SL)
9.00 BBC News
11.15 Politics Live
1.00pm Richard Osman's House of Games. Rickie Haywood-Williams, Sally Phillips, Vikki Stone and Dan Walker take part (r)
1.30 The Edge. Game show (r)
2.15 Weatherman Walking (r)
2.45 Animal Park. The keepers discover that an armadillo is bleeding (r) (AD)
3.30 Dogs in the Wild: Meet the Family. Following packs of wild dogs (r) (AD)
4.30 Vintage Antiques Roadshow. A 2003 edtion from Clitheroe in Lancashire (r)
5.15 Flog It! From Ushaw in Co Durham (r)
6.00 Richard Osman's House of Games. With Ken Bruce, Alice Roberts, Perri Shakes-Drayton and Kiell Smith-Bynoe (r)
6.30 Great British Railway Journeys. Michael Portillo is at the Surrey countryside (r) (AD)

7.00 Celebrity Antiques Road Trip DJ duo Nihal Arthanayake and Dev Griffin travel around the southeast, searching for profitable antiques. They are joined by experts Catherine Southon and James Braxton (r)

8.00 Inside the Factory Presenter Paddy McGuinness visits a factory in Lincoln where he explores how they make 500 million packs of Quavers cheese curls every year out of the potato starch left over from the production of crisps (3/6) (r) (AD)

9.00 Stolen Babies Documentary about forced adoption under a practice sanctioned by administrations across the UK from 1949 until 1976. It tells the stories of five women, revealing the structures that enabled this practice to take place, shining a light on one of the most significant human rights injustices that took place in the second half of the 20th century. *See picks of the day* (AD)

10.30 Newsnight

11.05 Couples Therapy Relationship therapist Dr Orna Guralnik is on hand as a couple have a confrontation over online infidelities (6/9)
11.30 Couples Therapy A couple work to break a familiar cycle and a woman comes to terms with a past assault and connects with her anger (7/9)

12.05am A House Through Time Calton Hill's new residents confront bigamy and brutality (r) (AD) **1.05** Sign Zone: Celebrity MasterChef. The remaining four celebrities cook for Tom Kerridge (r) (AD, SL) **2.05-3.05** The Mother of All Cons. Megan's funeral service is suddenly cancelled (r) (AD, SL)

ITV1

6.00am Good Morning Britain
10.00 This Morning
1.30pm ITV News; Weather
2.00 Dickinson's Real Deal. In Sheffield, David Dickinson discovers a famous name artist in the den, Tracy Thackray-Howitt smells a profit in an old perfume bottle and David Ford cuts a deal on a penknife (r) (AD)
3.00 Deal or No Deal. Stephen Mulhern hosts as another contestant tries to open the 22 red boxes in the right order, taking on the infamous Banker for the chance to win a life-changing cash prize (r) (AD)
4.00 Tipping Point. Ben Shephard hosts the arcade-themed quiz in which contestants drop tokens down a choice of four chutes in the hope of winning a £10,000 jackpot (r)
5.00 The Chase. Bradley Walsh presents as contestants from Essex, Northampton, Birmingham and Bristol take on one of the ruthless Chasers to win a cash prize (r)
6.00 Regional News; Weather
6.30 ITV News; Weather

7.30 Millionaire Hot Seat Quiz hosted by Jeremy Clarkson. Another six hopefuls compete for £1 million

8.00 Emmerdale An arrival shocks the villagers, while something is weighing on Gabby's mind (AD)

8.30 Coronation Street Idris confronts Ronnie for stealing his car, and Lauren takes Ollie to visit Betsy (AD)

9.00 Professor T A school inspector is murdered in his home firstly by stabbing then smothering and a number of items are stolen, which links the case to a spate of local burglaries that Maiya is trying to get under control (3/6) (AD)

10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather; followed by Regional News

10.45 WhatsApp Obsession: The Murder of Stephanie Hansen Documentary about a woman stabbed to death by her housemate, whose obsession prompted him to plant secret cameras and bombard her with coercive messages (r) (AD)

11.40 British Touring Car Championship Highlights Action from races that were staged at Donington Park (r)

12.55am Shop on TV 3.00 Force of Nature. A look at animals' battle for survival as climate change intensifies (r) (AD, SL) **3.55** Bradley & Barney Walsh: Breaking Dad. The actor and his son begin their latest challenge in Sydney, Australia (r) (AD, SL) **4.15** Unwind with ITV **5.35-6.00** Pictionary (r) (AD, SL)

Channel 4

6.30am The King of Queens (r) (AD)
7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond (r) (AD)
9.10 Frasier (r) (AD)
11.10 Ramsay's 24 Hours to Hell and Back. Help for an Irish pub in California (r) (AD)
12.05pm Channel 4 News Summary
12.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It. An art deco fire guard is unearthed in north Wales (r) (AD)
1.10 The Great House Giveaway. A family home in Middlesbrough is renovated (r)
2.10 Countdown. With comedian and TV presenter Zoe Lyons in Dictionary Corner
3.00 A Place in the Sun. A couple seek their dream holiday home in Nerja, Spain (r)
4.00 The Great B&B Challenge. The pairs host a paddle-boarding trip, visit a food-inspired B&B and go to a goat farm (r)
5.00 Château DIY. A couple find themselves are pushed to the breaking point (r) (AD)
6.00 A New Life in the Sun: Where Are They Now? Wet weather threatens a couple's new business venture, and two former snail farmers turn their hands to something new

7.00 Channel 4 News

8.00 Kirstie and Phil's Love It or List It: Brilliant Builds Kirstie Allsopp and Phil Spencer look back at a couple divided over their dated Milton Keynes home and an overlooked garden in Hamilton that provided little privacy for the owners (AD)

9.00 The Jury: 14 and on Trial for Murder Fourteen-year-old defendant Daniel describes growing up in an abusive household. But his evidence is contradicted by other witnesses, painting a disturbing picture. Continues next Tuesday (2/4) (AD)

10.00 9/11: Days That Shocked the World Twenty five years on from 9/11, rescue workers, survivors and witnesses describe — some, for the first time — how a regular morning became an unimaginable nightmare. *See picks of the day* (1/2) (AD)

11.00 9/11: Days That Shocked the World Witnesses to the attacks recall the collapse of the Twin Towers and the crash of a fourth hijacked airliner — United Flight 93 — in Pennsylvania. *See picks of the day* (2/2) (AD)

12.00 Emergency Helicopter Medics (r) (AD) **1.00am** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA (r) (SL) **1.50 FILM: Minari (12, 2020)** Drama starring Steven Yeun (SL) **3.50** Sunday Brunch (r) **4.05** Jamie: Eat Yourself Healthy (r) (AD, SL) **5.00** Couples Come Dine with Me (r) (SL) **5.50-6.30** Countdown (r)

5

6.00am Milkshake!
9.05 Entertainment News on 5
9.15 Jeremy Vine
11.30 Storm & Alexis
12.30pm Live Snooker: British Open. Katie Shanahan presents coverage of the afternoon session on day three, held at The Centaur in Cheltenham, featuring second-round matches. Zhao Xintong, then the reigning world champion, beat Stuart Bingham 4-1 at this stage last year, and Zhang Anda prevailed 4-3 against Bai Yulu, with Bai narrowly missing out on becoming the first woman to defeat a top-16 man. Match analysis is provided by Stephen Hendry, Ken Doherty, and Joe Perry
5.30 5 News with Dan Walker
6.25 Car Pound Cops. In this edition, two Surrey Police officers, who are using automatic number plate recognition while out on patrol, pull over a Romanian driver whose vehicle may be falsely registered (r)
6.55 5 News Update

7.00 Cycling: Vuelta a España Rebecca Charlton presents highlights of stage 11 of the race, a 151.3km route from Cartagena to Lorca

7.55 5 News Update

8.00 Call the Bailiffs: Time to Pay Up Agents pursue a company ordered by a tribunal to repay money unlawfully deducted from a former employee's wages, and a company that owes more than £2,000 in unpaid legal fees to a solicitor's firm (AD)

9.00 The Game Patrick intensifies his psychological assault on Huw and Margot when Jackie breaks into Margot's flat, scratches out pictures of Sam, and steals Margot's diary. Meanwhile, Margot learns that Huw has secretly visited Patrick in prison. Continues next week (2/4)

10.00 A&E: Crash Scene Emergency A 20-year-old is critically injured and her older sister suffers a broken neck when their car collides with another vehicle and flips (r)

11.00 Ambulance: Code Red A critical care paramedic races to treat 60-year-old who has been involved in a high-speed crash. Plus, a teenager has seriously injured his leg at a motocross event, and a 70-year-old has symptoms of a heart attack (r)

12.00 A&E After Dark (r) **12.55am** Car Pound Cops (r) **1.30** Cruise TV (r) **2.30** GPs: Behind Closed Doors (r) **3.20** The Highland Vet (r) (SL) **4.15** Yorkshire with Jane McDonald (r) (SL) **5.15** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom (r) (AD, SL) **5.35** Paw Patrol (r) (SL) **5.50-6.00** Mixmups (r) (AD, SL)

television

"magic" suit, code-breaking and a honey trap. Guest stars include Ruth Codd, Liza Sadovy and Claire Skinner. **JD**

9/11: Days That Shocked the World
Channel 4, 10pm/11pm

Next Friday marks the 25th anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon that killed nearly 3,000 people and destabilised the geopolitical landscape for years. For those who can bear to revisit the horror of the news that day — or for those too young to recall the events as they unfolded in New York and Washington — this sombre two-part documentary re-examines the events of 9/11, showing how an ordinary Tuesday morning suddenly went spinning off its axis as four hijacked aircraft struck the US. Eyewitnesses — among them rescue workers and survivors — here discuss the terrifying sense of chaos that suddenly enveloped them.**VS**

STREAMING CHOICE

Turning Point: Generation 9/11
Netflix

The America of Trump, Ice, mass shootings, increased surveillance and widespread disinformation owes almost everything to September 11, 2001. That's the argument posited in this documentary from the director Brian Knappenberger. Speaking to children who lost their parents in the attacks, young Afghans impacted by the war on terror and US Marines shaped by the 2021 withdrawal, Knappenberger presents a sobering portrait of modern America as a trauma victim, still unable to comprehend the damage it has done to itself over the past quarter-century.

FILM CHOICE

The Gunfighter (U, 1950)
Film4, 5pm

Gregory Peck brings that soft-spoken baritone gravitas to a role that was earmarked for John Wayne and might have been a corny cowboy cliché. Peck plays Jimmy Ringo, a quick-draw legend, who has decided to go straight and reconcile with his wife. There's one problem. Almost everyone wants to kill him, from disgruntled relatives of his executed victims to quick-draw "squirts" with ambitions of their own. There is barely a dusty saloon into which Ringo can amble without hearing the words: "Draw, mister!" (85min) **Kevin Maher**

BBC4
7.00pm Fred Dibnah's Building of Britain. An edition exploring Norman engineering techniques (1/6) (AD) **7.30** Villages by the Sea. Seaton Sluice in Northumberland (7/10) **8.00** Rome: A History of the Eternal City. A look at Rome's rise from the abandonment and neglect of the 14th century. Last in the series (AD) **9.00** Rome's Invisible City. Alexander Armstrong explores the city's underground treasures (AD) **10.00** I, Claudius. Messalina begins a rebellion of her own (11/12) **10.50** I, Claudius. As he approaches the end of his years, the emperor is urged to re-marry (12/12) **11.45** The Australian Wars (AD) **12.45am** Rome's Invisible City (AD) **1.45** Fred Dibnah's Building of Britain (AD) **2.15** Villages by the Sea (SL) **2.45-3.45** Rome: A History of the Eternal City (AD, SL)

Sky Arts
6.00am Mozart's Women: A Musical Journey **7.30** The Joy of Painting (AD) **8.00** Artist of the Year: Masterclass (AD) **9.00** Tales of the Unexpected **10.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.00** Discovering: Anthony Hopkins **12.00** The Who Sell Out: Classic Albums **1.00pm** Tales of the Unexpected **2.00** The Alfred Hitchcock Hour **3.00** Stories from the National Portrait Gallery **4.00** Discovering: Faye Dunaway **5.00** Portrait Artist of the Year 2024. Opening heat of the contest (AD) **6.00** Tales of the Unexpected **7.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **8.00** Michael Flatley — Lord of the Dance: Dangerous Games **9.50** The Nineties. TV shows **10.50** Art's Wildest Movement: Mannerism. Exploring the style (AD) **11.50-1.00am** Mary Cassatt: Painting the Modern Woman (AD)

More4
8.55am Find It, Fix It, Flog It (AD) **10.00** Four in a Bed **12.40pm** Come Dine with Me **3.20** Four in a Bed **5.55** Car SOS. A rare Talbot Sunbeam Lotus is restored (AD) **6.50** Car SOS. A project to restore a tired 1991 VW T4 Campervan (AD) **7.55** Grand Designs. Designers converting a Victorian dairy in London into a home (6/10) (AD) **9.00** The Roman Empire by Train with Alice Roberts. In this edition, the anthropologist explores the key sites of the Roman empire (AD) **10.00** 24 Hours in A&E. Patients include an 84-year-old man who has fallen down the stairs at home (AD) **11.05** 24 Hours in A&E. Hospital staff and patients talk about the importance of family support (AD) **12.10am** 999: On the Front Line **1.15** 24 Hours in A&E (AD) **3.25-3.55** The Perfect Pitch

BBC3
7.00pm The Catch Up **7.05** Deadly 60. White sharks **7.30** Deadly 60. The Amazon **8.00** Top Gear. Slash and Kimi Raikkonen get behind the steering wheels of Reasonably Priced Cars **9.00** Top Gear. Damian Lewis is the Star in a Reasonably Priced Car **10.00** Guy Montgomery's Guy Mont-Spelling Bee Australia. The panel Go Fishin' and team up for a round of Shut Up and Spell **10.50** Guy Montgomery's Guy Mont-Spelling Bee Australia. The panel have one last shot at winning the contest. Last in the series **11.35** RuPaul's Drag Race UK: Meet the Queens. RuPaul introduces the competition's 12 queens (r) **12.00** The Young Offenders (AD) **3.05am** Zoners (r) (SL) **3.20am-4.00** Scamanda (r) (AD, SL)

ITV2
6.00am Backyard Builds **6.30** Dinner Date (AD) **7.30** The Real Housewives of Potomac **8.20** The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills **9.15** The Only Way Is Essex **10.15** Dawson's Creek **11.15** Charmed **12.10pm** Deal or No Deal (AD) **1.10** Supermarket Sweep **2.10** Wheel of Fortune (AD) **3.10** The Only Way Is Essex **4.10** The Real Housewives of Potomac **5.00** The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills. Reality series **6.00** Celebrity Catchphrase (AD) **7.00** Celebrity Wheel of Fortune (AD) **8.00** The 1% Club (AD) **9.00** Romesh Ranganathan's Parents' Evening. Game show **10.00** Family Guy. Triple bill (AD) **11.35** American Dad! (AD) **12.35am** Bob's Burgers. Double bill (AD) **1.30** G'wed (AD, SL) **2.00am-2.25** Transaction (AD, SL)

ITV3
6.00am George and Mildred **7.05** Classic Emmerdale (AD) **8.05** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **9.10** Agatha Christie's Poirot (AD) **11.30** Heartbeat (AD) **1.35pm** Midsomer Murders (AD) **3.35** Classic Emmerdale (AD) **4.40** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **5.50** Heartbeat. Rural drama (AD) **8.00** Midsomer Murders. A killer strikes at a disused abbey that is believed to be cursed (AD) **10.00** Lewis. A parcel bomb claims the life of a genius mathematician, and as Lewis and Hathaway investigate, suspicion falls on the victim's spurned wife (AD) **11.50** Agatha Christie's Poirot. A passenger is murdered on the detective's flight from Paris, leaving few clues to the killer's identity (AD) **2.00am-2.25** George and Mildred

St Mirren midfielder Ryan Carr

Live Men's Cycling
TNT Sports 1, 10.30am-3.30pm
Coverage of stage one of the Tour of Britain, a 182.5km route starting and ending in Lincoln

Live US Open Tennis
Sky Sports Tennis, 3.30pm-5.30am
Coverage of day four at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in Flushing Meadows, New York

Live SPFL: Falkirk v Rangers
Sky Sports Football, 7pm-10.30
(Kick-off **8.00**). Coverage of the Scottish Premiership match staged at Falkirk Stadium

Live EFL: Burnley v Middlesbrough
Sky Sports Main Event, 7.30pm-10.30
(Kick-off **8.00**). Coverage of the Championship fixture which is staged at Turf Moor

Live EFL: Millwall v Wrexham
Sky Sports +, 7.35pm-9.45
(Kick-off **7.45**). Coverage of the Championship game at The Den

Talking Pictures
6.00am FILM: Up In The Air (PG, 1940) (b/w) **7.15 FILM: Dentist in the Chair (U, 1960)** (b/w) **8.50** What's on TPTV with Noel **9.00 FILM: My Man Godfrey (U, 1936)** (b/w) **10.50 FILM: The Man Who Wouldn't Talk (U, 1958)** (b/w) **12.45pm** Look at Life **1.00** The Buccaneers (b/w) **1.35** John Huston: Adventures of a Free Soul **2.40** The Pale Faced Girl **3.15** Look at Life **3.30** Dial 999 (b/w) **4.00** That's My Boy **4.35** Aberdeen: The Silver City **5.00 FILM: The Ship that Died of Shame (PG, 1955)** **7.00** Out of Town **7.30** Boy with a Flute **8.05** Van der Valk (2/6) **9.10** Casebook of Sherlock Holmes **11.15 FILM: Carrington VC (PG, 1954)** Courtroom drama (b/w) **1.15am-3.05 FILM: Every Day's a Holiday (U, 1965)** Musical comedy

Film4
11.00am The Personal History of David Copperfield (PG, 2019) Adaptation of Charles Dickens' novel starring Dev Patel (AD) **1.25pm Rosaline (15, 2022)** Comedy starring Kaitlyn Dever **3.15 The Story of Robin Hood and His Merrie Men (U, 1952)** Adventure starring Richard Todd **5.00 The Gunfighter (U, 1950)** Western starring Gregory Peck and Millard Mitchell. *See film choice* (b/w) **6.45 Uncharted (12, 2022)** Action adventure with Tom Holland (AD) **9.00 Venom: Let There Be Carnage (15, 2021)** Comic-book fantasy sequel starring Tom Hardy, Woody Harrelson and Naomie Harris (AD) **10.50 Daredevil (15, 2003)** Comic-book adventure starring Ben Affleck and Michael Clarke Duncan **12.55am-2.45 The Missionary (15, 1982)** Comedy with Michael Palin

ITV4
6.00am Magnum, PI (AD, SL) **8.00** Robin of Sherwood **9.05** Boon **10.15** World of Sport **10.20** Live Cycling: Tour of Britain. Coverage of stage one, a 182.5km circular route that starts and ends in Lincoln **4.00pm** The Best of the 80s **4.15** River Monsters (AD) **4.45** The Professionals (AD) **5.55** Minder (AD) **7.00** Aussie Pickers. Lucas Callaghan and Adam McDonald view military items in Melbourne **8.00** Cycling: Tour of Britain Highlights. Action from stage one **9.00 FILM: London Has Fallen (15, 2016)** Action thriller sequel starring Gerard Butler and Aaron Eckhart **11.05** River Monsters (AD) **11.35** English Football League Highlights. The midweek fixtures **1.00am-3.00** All Elite Wrestling: Collision. Hard-hitting action

U&Drama
6.00am Teleshopping **7.25** The Bill **8.20** Doctors **9.40** Classic Holby City **11.00** Casualty (AD) **12.00** The Bill **1.00pm** Classic EastEnders **2.20** Classic Neighbours **3.20** Sister Boniface Mysteries (AD) **4.20** Kingdom **5.20** As Time Goes By **6.00** Last of the Summer Wine **8.00** The Chelsea Detective. Part one of two. An antiques dealer is found dead (5/8) (AD) **9.00** The Chelsea Detective. Part two of two. Max and Layla think they have their culprit (6/8) (AD) **10.00** New Tricks. The team comes closer to solving the Gibraltar murders (2/10) (AD) **11.00** Copper. Period crime drama **12.00** Lovejoy **1.00am** Sister Boniface Mysteries (AD) **2.00** At Home with the Braithwaites **3.00-4.00** The Chelsea Detective (SL)

Variations

BBC1 N Ireland
10.40pm The Big Deal with Steph McGovern 11.40 Reading Festival Highlights 12.40am The Hit List (r) 1.25am-6.00 BBC News

BBC1 Scotland
8.00pm-9.00 River City: The Last Take (r) 10.40 Sportscene. Football highlights 11.40 Scotcast (r) 12.10am Reading Festival Highlights 1.15am-6.00 BBC News

BBC1 Wales
9.00pm-10.00pm Ryan Jones: Unbreakable. Documentary

BBC2 Wales
9.00pm Celebrity MasterChef 10.00-10.30 Rewind: 60 Years of Welsh Pop. A look at Wales' folk music heritage (r) 11.05 Stolen Babies 12.35am-1.05 Coast (r)

STV
10.40pm Scotland Tonight 11.05 FILM: Man of Steel (2013) 1.20am-3.00 Shop on TV

BBC Scotland
7.00pm Reporting Scotland 7.30 Scotland's Home of the Year 2023 (r) 8.00 Island Crossings (r) 9.00 Disclosure: Welcome to Glasgow (r) 10.00 Icons of Football (r) 10.30 Scot Squad (r) 11.00 Scotcast 11.30pm-12.00 The Trials That Shocked Scotland (r)

S4C
6.00pm Dan Do (r) 6.30 Ralïo+ (r) 7.00 Heno 7.30 News 8.00 Pobol y Cwm. Kelly suspects Griffiths is keeping a secret 8.25 Cartrefi Cymru (r) 9.00 Priodas Pum Mil. Nia and Geraint from Lower Brynamman plan their wedding (r) 10.00-11.34pm Y Deis (r)

PBS America
8.00am Weathered: Earth's Extremes **8.50** Secrets of the Royal Palaces **9.45** Ancient Apocalypse **10.55** France: The Post War Recovery **12.00** Cleopatra **1.00pm** Secrets of the Royal Palaces **2.10** Ancient Apocalypse **3.15** France: The Post War Recovery **4.25** Cleopatra **5.25** Secrets of the Royal Palaces. Hampton Court Palace **6.25** Ancient Apocalypse **7.35** France: The Post War Recovery. Part two of two. How division hindered France's recovery after the Second World War **8.40** Cleopatra. Part two of two. Dramatised documentary about the iconic Ancient Egyptian ruler **9.40** Secrets of the Royal Palaces **10.40** Ancient Apocalypse **12.00** France: The Post War Recovery. Documentary **1.10am-2.00** Weathered: Earth's Extremes

Sky Atlantic
6.00am Fish Town (r) **8.00** Billions (r) (AD) **10.15** The Last of Us (r) (AD) **12.30pm** Homicide: Life on the Street (r) **2.20** Billions (r) (AD) **4.30** The White Lotus (r) (AD) **6.45** The Last of Us (r) (AD) **7.50** The Last of Us. Joel and Ellie enter dangerous territory in search of the Fireflies (6/9) (r) (AD) **9.00** The Terror: Devil in Silver. Chaos ensues when the staff take the patients for pizza (3/6) (r) **10.00** The Terror: Devil in Silver. Coffee discovers what actually lies beyond the silver door (4/6) (r) **11.00** Task. Tom prepares for a court appearance (2/7) (r) (AD) **12.10am** The Five-Star Weekend. Double bill of the drama (r) (AD) **2.00** Fightland. London's gangland is pushed to the brink of war **3.05** Gomorrah: The Origins (r) **4.10-6.00** The Guest Wing (r) (AD)

Sky Docs
6.00am History of the Sitcom (r) **7.00** Discovering: Nicole Kidman (r) (AD) **8.00** The Directors (r) **9.00** Last Call: When a Serial Killer Stalked Queer New York (r) (AD) **10.00** Vegas: The Story of Sin City (r) **11.00** Dark Horses: Italy's World Cup Triumph (r) **12.00** Michael X: Hustler, Revolutionary, Outlaw (r) **2.00pm** Football Bomber: The Dortmund Bus Attack (r) **4.00** The Directors (r) **5.00** Discovering: Nicole Kidman (r) (AD) **6.00** The Man Who Bought Cricket. Story of Allen Stanford (r) (AD) **7.00** Ghislaine Maxwell: Epstein's Shadow. The life of the disgraced former socialite (1-3/3) (r) (AD) **10.00** Groomed: The Truth Behind the Lie (3/3) (r) (AD) **11.00** The Essex Murders (r) (AD) **2.00am** Luca: Seeing Red (r) **4.00-5.00** The Directors (r)

U&Yesterday
6.10am The Architecture the Railways Built (AD) **8.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics (AD) **10.00** Rise of the Nazis **11.00** The World at War **12.00** Antiques Roadshow **2.00pm** Bangers & Cash (AD) **4.00** Rise of the Nazis **5.00** The World at War. Bombing raids on Britain **6.00** Antiques Roadshow. A visit to Lowther Castle in Cumbria **7.00** Seven Worlds, One Planet. The wildlife of Europe (5/7) (AD) **8.00** Michael Palin: Travels of a Lifetime. Michael revisits his six-part travel series *Himalaya* **9.00** Explore. The Rift Valley **10.00** Bangers & Cash (AD) **11.00** Bangers & Cash (AD) **12.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics. A 1981 Rolls-Royce (AD) **1.00am** Find It, Fix It, Flog It **2.00** The Architecture the Railways Built (AD) **3.00-6.10** Teleshopping

MindGames

Poker Byron Jacobs

Be the elephant, not the fly

The column last week discussed the various adaptations needed to transition from cash to tournament play. It focused purely on action prior to the final table. However, if you reach a final table, the adjustments you must make now dwarf any earlier considerations. Playing a final table as though it were a random cash game is a recipe for disaster. Correct final-table play is often totally unintuitive. On occasion you need to fold extremely strong hands; at others you should get all-in with mediocre holdings.

Why? It's all about the stack sizes. In cash games two things happen. First, everyone tends to have about 100bb (big blinds, the standard measure of stack size). Second, and more important, your stack's value has an exact cash equivalent. Your stack is 100 and the chips are $1 each? Your stack is worth exactly $100 – as you would expect.

This is *never* the case at a final table and a quick thought experiment clarifies this. Two players remain and prizes are $1,000 and $500. One player has one chip, the other has 9,999. The value of the single chip is a tiny bit more than $500 (the one-chip player could win – stranger things have happened ...). Each of the other 9,999 has a value of just over $0.10. This is an extreme example but chip and stack values at the final table are highly fluid.

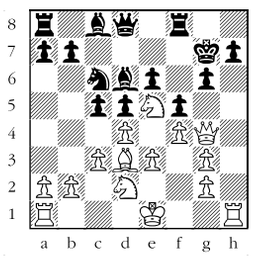
Final-table play has generated a huge amount of theory (books of more than 400 pages have been written on it) and anyone who plays tournaments regularly should study it to some degree. The players at a final table are competing for a lot of money and this magnifies any mistakes. If you sit in a $100 buy-in cash game, a bad mistake could cost a few dollars. At a final table an intuitively reasonable (but actually bad) decision to call an all-in bet could cost thousands of dollars. Final-table skill can be worth far more than skill in the earlier stages.

Although final-table play is highly complex, there are some basic strategies to keep in mind. In general don't mess with stacks much bigger than yours. If you have 10bb, shy away from battles with a player who has 80bb. The threat that you pose is to diminish their stack from 80bb to 70bb – an inconvenience at most. Meanwhile, their reciprocal threat is to obliterate you – a total disaster. In this encounter they are the metaphorical elephant and you are the fly being flicked away by its tail. Instead pick on players you can hurt.

Final-table theory is governed by a system known as the Independent Chip Model (ICM). This tells you how much your stack is worth in real terms and the equity you need before risking it in an all-in confrontation. Some of the results are utterly counter-intuitive. More next week.

For more puzzles, including Mini Sudoku, extra Codeword, Train Tracks and Futoshiki
go to page 10

Winning Move



White to play.
This position is from Agmanov-Ilko-Toth, chess.com 2026.

Earlier in this game Black captured a white bishop that was on the g3-square. This appeared harmless enough but it enabled White to recapture with the h-pawn and thus open a file towards the black king. Black has now further weakened his position with the advance ... f7-f5. This is too much. How did White crash through?

Codeword No 5935

13	25	1	23	9	25	15	■	16	25	2	23	1	
19	■	23	■	5	■	19	■	25	■	7	■	19	
22	25	26	23	18	■	2	23	1	10	5	14	7	
25	■	5	■	4	■	23	■	23	■	7	■	6	
21	25	4	4	19	23	1	18	■	3	11	1	18	
5	■	■	■	26	■	18	■	20	■	1	■	■	
4	25	5 A	7	20	23	■	15	18	2	23	4	22	
■	■	24	■	7	■	20	■	2	■	■	■	4	
21	1	11	12	■	4	19	2	7	23	1 R	19	5	
25	■	23	■	2	■	5	■	23	■	23	■	10	
17	25	25	9	21	11	7	■	1	23	21	7	25	
23	■	11	■	1	■	11	■	19	■	5	■	11	
1	19	2	8	18	■	2	21	5	1	16	23	1	

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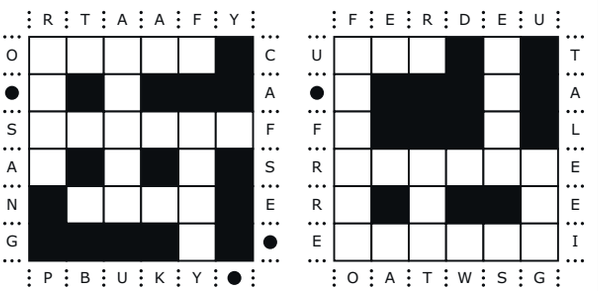
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1 R	2	3	4	5 A	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	

Every letter in this crossword-style grid is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded. *Yesterday's solution, right*

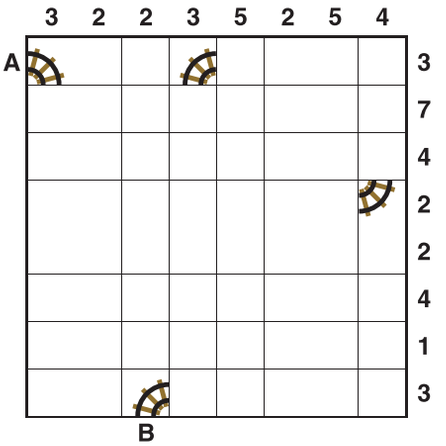
Cluelines **Stuck on Codeword?** To receive 4 random clues call 0901 293 6262 or text TIMECODE to 64343. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. Texts cost £1 plus your standard network charge. For the full solution call 0905 757 0142. If you have an old newspaper and need clues from the past 7 days, call 0905 624 0024. Calls to 0905 cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm).

Lexica Easy No 9091 Hard No 9092



Slide the letters either horizontally or vertically back into the grid to produce a completed crossword. Letters are allowed to slide over other letters

Train Tracks No 2960



Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

Quintagram® No 2662

Solve all five **cryptic** clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Recalled Egyptian city deity (4)

_ _ _ _

2 Fabled beast caught by stealthy dragon (5)

_ _ _ _ _

3 Cheat in church on leave (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

4 Rare gas firstly acts upon tired sailor (8)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

5 Lost knees ruined anatomical specimens? (9)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

A	A	A	C	D	E	E	E
E	E	E	F	G	H	K	L
L	N	N	O	O	R	R	S
S	S	T	T	U	U	Y	Z

Challenge your mind with these fiendish word and number puzzles

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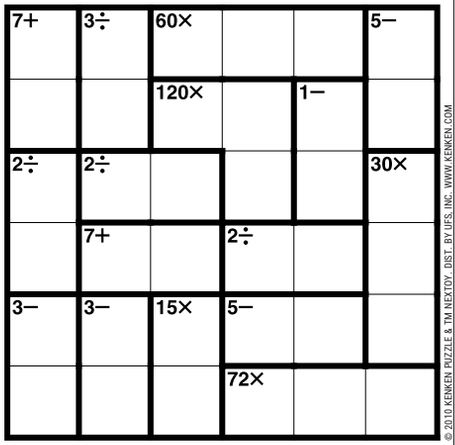
Try Wordhunt and Picle, our new online Quick Play puzzles at thetimes.com/puzzles and on the Live app

KenKen Medium No 6927



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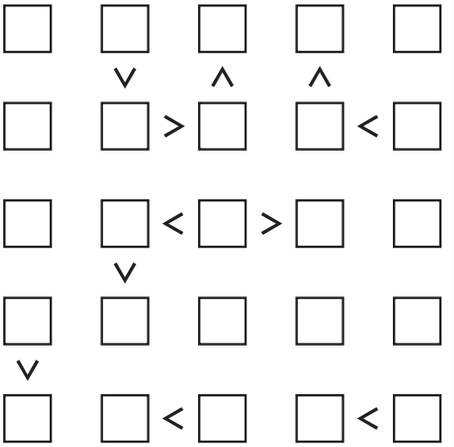
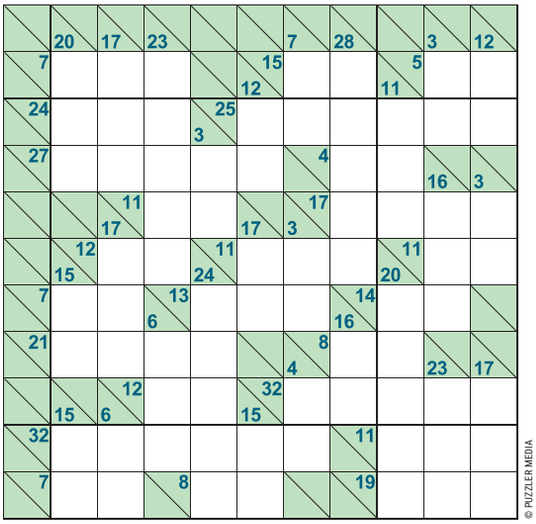
All the digits 1 to 6 must appear in every row and column. In each thick-line "block", the target number in the top left-hand corner is calculated from the digits in all the cells in the block, using the operation indicated by the symbol.

Futoshiki No 5475



Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.

Kakuro No 4434



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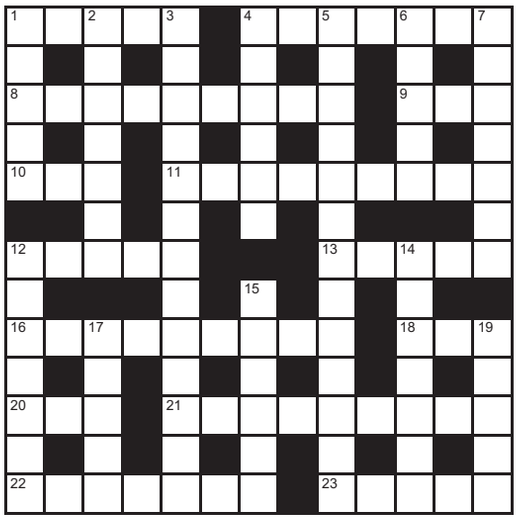
Fill the grid using the numbers 1 to 9 only. The numbers in each horizontal or vertical run of white squares add up to the total in the triangle to its left or above it. The same number may occur more than once in a row or column, but not within the same run of white squares.

MindGames

times2 Crossword No 10,251



Across

1 Electrical cables (5)
4 Burial mound, barrow (7)
8 *"Cogito, ergo sum"* philosopher (9)
9 Southwest Scottish port (3)
10 Take in food (3)
11 Speak with good diction (9)
12 Fluid from eyes or nose (5)
13 Parliamentary voting area (5)
16 Composer of *Orpheus in the Underworld* (9)
18 Furrow made by a wheel (3)
20 Bakery product (3)
21 Hirsute quality (9)
22 Slumbering person (7)
23 Clear-skied, fair (5)

Down

1 Angled doorstop (5)
2 Prize at a gymkhana, eg (7)
3 Responsible governance by a political leader (13)
4 Disapproving utterance (3-3)
5 Children's party game (7,6)
6 Rainforest vine (5)
7 GP's workplace (7)
12 Quadrilateral (7)
14 Develop rapidly (7)
15 Not as tricky (6)
17 Wooden or metal barrier (5)
19 Bad-tempered, waspish (5)

Solution to Crossword 10,250

M	U	S	T	A	R	D		D	O	S	E	S
O		U		B		O		A		U		W
W	I	E	L	D		D	U	R	A	B	L	E
E				O		G		E		E		L
R	E	C	O	M	M	E	N	D		D	O	T
		A		E		D				I		E
P	O	L	A	N	D		D	E	B	T	O	R
A		E				C		C		O		
N	O	D		D	E	A	T	H	T	R	A	P
A		O		R		N		I				I
C	O	N	T	E	N	D		D	I	G	U	P
E		I		A		I		N		A		I
A	W	A	R	D		D	R	A	U	G	H	T

Need help with today's puzzle? Call 0905 757 0143 to check the answers. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Bridge Andrew Robson

Modern Bidding Developments
35. When to control-bid kings

Say you have agreed a suit and are looking for slam — typically, at the Four-level. The bid of a suit (not trumps) is a *control bid* (unless it's the first bid after major-suit agreement, in which case, as long is it's a player's second bid eg 1♠-3♠-4♦, it's a natural (trial) bid).

Classically, a control bid (formerly known as a cue bid but that term is so nebulous, let's always term them control bids) is the bid of a suit headed by an ace (or occasionally a void, but you should try to jump when making a shortage control bid, more on this later). They always show slam-suitability and are never compulsory.

However, there are many occasionas where control-bidding a king is admissable. Here they are.

1. Partner is balanced. She won't have a singleton (facing a singleton is the big difference between an ace and a king).

2. Partner has bid the suit. Again, she can't have a singleton and will love the king opposite almost as much as the ace (in fact, she's very likely to have the ace herself, in which case she'll know you've got the king).

3. Partner has already control-bid the suit (she has the ace).

4. You have earlier bypassed a control bid of that suit, so can be presumed not to have the ace.

5. You have very good trumps (to compensate).

6. It's the opponents' suit and partner may be worried your partnership are missing the ace-king.

7. You have shown a weak hand; partner won't expect the ace.

8. Space is very short.

OK, that's a very long list. There's probably a No 9 and No 10 too! So let's flip it round: only don't control-bid a king if partner could have a singleton.

Dealer: South
Vul: Neither

	♠ A43 ♥ 864 ♦ K3 ♣ AQ542	
♠ 108 ♥ J1097 ♦ J9862 ♣ 87	N W E S	♠ J97 ♥ Q53 ♦ A104 ♣ J1093
	♠ KQ652 ♥ AK2 ♦ Q75 ♣ K6	

S	W	N	E
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2NT(1)	Pass	3♠ (2)	Pass
4♣(3)	Pass	4♦(4)	Pass(5)
4NT(6)	Pass	5♥(6)	Pass
6♠	End		

(1) Showing 15-19, forcing to game.
(2) Showing her delayed (three-card) spade support.
(3) Inferentially showing a fifth spade (with only four, she'd have to bid 3NT). OK to control-bid a king in partner's suit.
(4) OK to control-bid a king when partner is balanced (no singleton).
(5) May make a lead-directing double but they're better done with kings, slow winners.
(6) How many aces? Answer: two.

You win West's ♥J lead with ♥K and lead ♦5 to ♦K. East wins ♦A and leads ♥Q. You win ♥A and score the diamond ruff, cashing ♦Q and ruffing ♦7.

You now cash ♠A, cross to ♠KQ (phew — 3-2 split), and can cash ♣K and cross to ♣AQ, dropping ♥2. Slam made.

andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk

Brain Trainer

EASY	6	x 5	+ 45	÷ 3	+ 13	÷ 2	x 6	– 34	DOUBLE IT	– 41
MEDIUM	5	+ 40	TRIPLE IT	x 9	÷ 15	TRIPLE IT	x 6	+ 10	HALVE IT	- 34
HARDER	60	x 4	DOUBLE IT	40% OF IT	HALVE IT	x 8	TRIPLE IT	÷ 24	÷ 3	DOUBLE IT

ANSWER

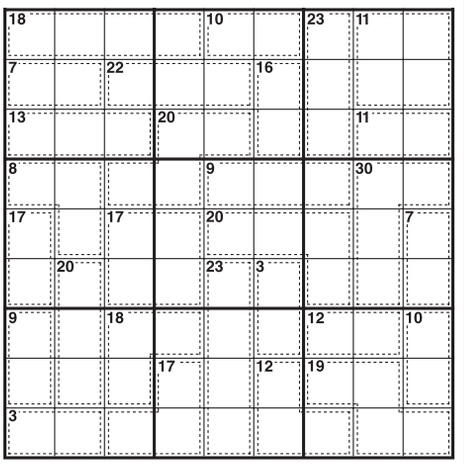
Polygon

From these letters, make words of **four** or more letters, always including the central letter. Answers must be in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, excluding capitalised words, plurals, conjugated verbs (past tense etc), adverbs ending in LY, comparatives and superlatives.
How you rate 14 words, average; 19, good; 23, very good; 27, excellent

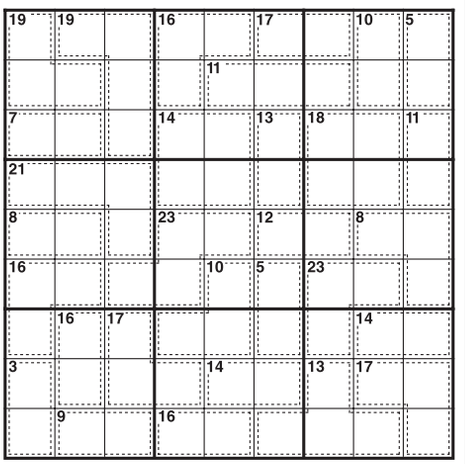
Yesterday's answers

enter, ere, erne, ever, evert, fern, **fervent**, fever, free, fret, nerve, never, reef, ref, rent, ret, rete, rev, revet, tern, terne, tree, treen, veer, vert

Killer Tricky No 10,908



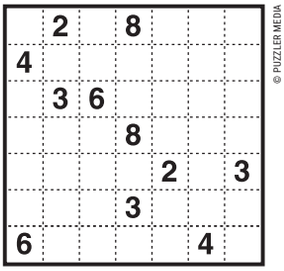
Killer Deadly No 10,909



As with standard Sudoku, fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

Cluelines Stuck on Sudoku, Killer or KenKen? Call 0901 293 6263 before midnight to receive four clues for any of today's puzzles. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Cell Blocks No 5818



Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

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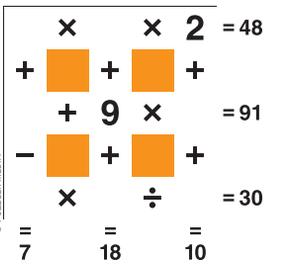
Set Square No 4437



Enter each of the numbers from 1 to 9 in the grid, so that the six sums work. We've placed two numbers to get you started. Each sum should be calculated left to right or top to bottom.

Please note, BODMAS does not apply

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Solutions

Quick Cryptic 3395

C	A	R	P	E	T		P	A	L	A	C	E
	V		R		O		A		A		O	
G	O	V	E	R	N	O	R		P	O	N	D
	I		S				T		S		V	
E	D	G	E		S	O	R	C	E	R	E	R
		N		E		T			N			
P	A	S	T	O	R		D	U	S	T	E	R
	G		V		G		U					
D	I	A	T	R	I	B	E		S	O	A	P
	T		I		E			P		M		
P	A	W	N		T	A	S	T	E	F	U	L
	T		G		T		U		C		S	
S	E	R	E	N	E		N	U	T	M	E	G

Codeword 5934

I	T	C	H	Y		A	S	S	A	Y		
S	H		I		Y	L		I		D		
U	S	E		S	H	O	W	Y		S	K	I
B	R				G			L		S		
J	U	M	P		F	A	R		S	E	A	T
U		O	W	L		E	F	T			I	
G	U	L	P		I		N	U	P	O	N	
A		P	U	N		A	W	N		C		
T	R	A	Y		G	E	L		T	E	X	T
I	M				A			N		I		
O	R	B		S	H	R	U	G		R	E	V
N	L		I		N		N		O	E		
Z	E	B	R	A		Q	U	I	L	L		

Kakuro 4433

	1	3		1	5	3		4	1
	5	8	1	3	7	2	6	9	4
7	6	9	2	4		1	8		
5	4		5	9		8	9	7	
8	3		3	8				8	5
9	8				3	4		6	3
	2	8	1		9	8		4	1
		6	2		7	9	1	5	2
1	6	9	5	8	4	7	2	3	
3	9		3	5	1		4	9	

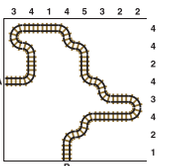
Sudoku 17,070

9	3	5	7	4	6	8	2	1
7	4	1	9	2	8	3	5	6
6	2	8	5	3	1	9	4	7
2	5	4	1	6	9	7	3	8
8	9	3	2	5	7	1	6	4
1	7	6	3	8	4	5	9	2
5	1	2	6	7	3	4	8	9
4	6	7	8	9	5	2	1	3
3	8	9	4	1	2	6	7	5

Tetonor 705

59	270	45	344
54 + 5	5 x 54	15 + 30	86 x 4
170	39	260	38
2 + 168	1 + 38	20 x 13	38 x 1
44	450	36	448
28 + 16	15 x 30	18 + 18	28 x 16
336	33	324	90
2 x 168	20 + 13	18 x 18	86 + 4

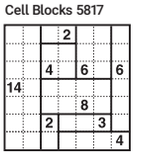
Train Tracks 2959



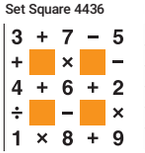
Sudoku 17,071

6	8	9	5	2	4	1	3	7
4	7	5	3	8	1	9	2	6
1	2	3	9	7	6	4	8	5
5	4	7	8	9	2	3	6	1
2	3	8	6	1	5	7	4	9
9	6	1	7	4	3	2	5	8
3	9	4	1	6	8	5	7	2
7	5	6	2	3	9	8	1	4
8	1	2	4	5	7	6	9	3

Cell Blocks 5817



Set Square 4436

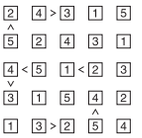


Lexica 9089

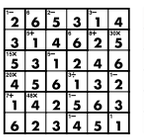
Sudoku 17,072

4	9	1	7	2	6	3	5	8
3	5	2	8	1	9	4	6	7
7	6	8	4	5	3	1	9	2
2	1	6	9	3	5	7	8	4
5	3	4	2	8	7	6	1	9
8	7	9	1	6	4	2	3	5
1	8	5	3	4	2	9	7	6
9	4	3	6	7	8	5	2	1
6	2	7	5	9	1	8	4	3

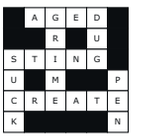
Futoshiki 5474



KenKen 6926



Lexica 9090



Killer 10,906

8	3	4	1	9	5	7	6	2
2	5	6	3	4	7	1	9	8
1	9	7	8	2	6	3	4	5
6	4	8	9	3	1	5	2	7
3	1	5	7	6	2	9	8	4
9	7	2	4	5	8	6	3	1
7	2	3	5	8	9	4	1	6
4	8	1	6	7	3	2	5	9
5	6	9	2	1	4	8	7	3

Killer 10,907

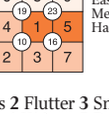
5	3	6	9	7	2	1	8	4
1	2	9	6	8	4	3	5	7
8	7	4	3	1	5	9	6	2
9	8	2	1	4	3	5	7	6
4	1	3	7	5	6	2	9	8
7	6	5	2	9	8	4	1	3
3	4	1	5	6	7	8	2	9
6	9	8	4	2	1	7	3	5
2	5	7	8	3	9	6	4	1

Today's solutions

Concise Quintagram
1 Steal
2 Stern
3 Regret
4 Dandruff
5 Reef knot

Cryptic Quintagram
1 Zeus
2 Hydra
3 Fleece
4 Argonaut
5 Skeletons

Sakuro 4836



Brain Trainer
Easy 119
Medium 700
Harder 64

Word watch
Guingette (b) A garden hosting public entertainment (*OED*)
Hantle (b) A sizeable amount (*Collins*)
Eidolon (b) A confusing reflection (*Chambers*)

Chess — Winning Move
1 Rxh7+! leads to a standard demolition of the black kingside. After 1 ... Kxh7 2 Qxg6+ Kh8 White has various ways to win, the most thematic being 3 0-0-0, when the introduction of the rook onto h1 next move will prove decisive.

Quiz
1 Dogs **2** Flutter **3** Snow White **4** Kidney **5** Romulus **6** King Charles III **7** *Phoenix Nights* **8** Sunderland **9** *Otello* **10** Thai **11** Coventry **12** Victoria Glendinning **13** Juana Inés de la Cruz **14** Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling Festival held in Edirne **15** Rob Beckett

THE TIMES

02.09.26

MindGames

For extra puzzles
See page 10

Word watch
David Parfitt

Guingette
a The chick of various aquatic birds
b A garden hosting public entertainment
c A matt cotton crepe fabric

Hantle
a A young red deer stag
b A sizeable amount
c A burden of responsibility

Eidolon
a A cause of sorrow
b A confusing reflection
c A mass of dense down feathers

Answers on page 15

Sudoku

Difficult No 17,073

					7		6
2		4		5			
		5		9			2
	4		9				1 6
				4	8		
	5		6				7 8
		2		1			3
1		7		3			
					2		9

Fiendish No 17,074

						6	1
						4	5
			6	7	8		9
					1	7	6
	6		3		7		9
	8	3	4				
5			8	1	9		
	7	9					
	3	8					

Super fiendish No 17,075

	8							
6	2			9				
	4		7		8			3
				8	4	9		5
4		8	3	2				
7			1		5		6	
				7			5	9
							2	

© PUZZLER MEDIA

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

The Times Daily Quiz
Olav Bjortomt

1 Two of which animals feature in the logo for the Royal Kennel Club?

2 What word for the flapping of a butterfly's wings is also a slang term for a bet?

3 Paula Rego's 1995 pastel work *Swallows the Poisoned Apple* features which fairytale character?

4 Glomerulonephritis damages the filtering portions of which human organ?

5 According to legend, the first Roman calendar was introduced by which co-founder of Rome?

6 Who is the longest-serving Duke of Cornwall in history?

GETTY IMAGES

7 Created by Peter Kay, which Channel 4 sitcom was mostly filmed at St Gregory's Social Club in Bolton?

8 In which Wearside city did the National Glass Centre (NGC) close in July?

9 In 1962, Bulgarian soprano Raina Kabaivanska made her Royal Opera House debut as Desdemona in which Verdi opera?

10 Founded in 2002, the UK-based Giggling Squid restaurant group serves which Asian cuisine?

11 In 1979, Jerry Dammers of the Specials founded the 2 Tone record label in which Midlands city?

12 Who won Whitbread prizes for her biographies of Vita Sackville-West (1983) and Anthony Trollope (1992)?

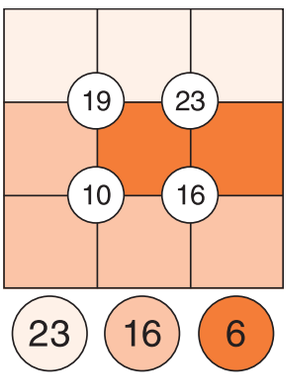
13 Dubbed "the Tenth Muse", which Mexican nun (1648-95) wrote the poem *Primero sueño* (*The First Dream*)?

14 Held since the mid-14th century, which Turkish festival is the world's oldest ongoing sporting event?

15 Which English comedian is pictured?

Answers on page 15

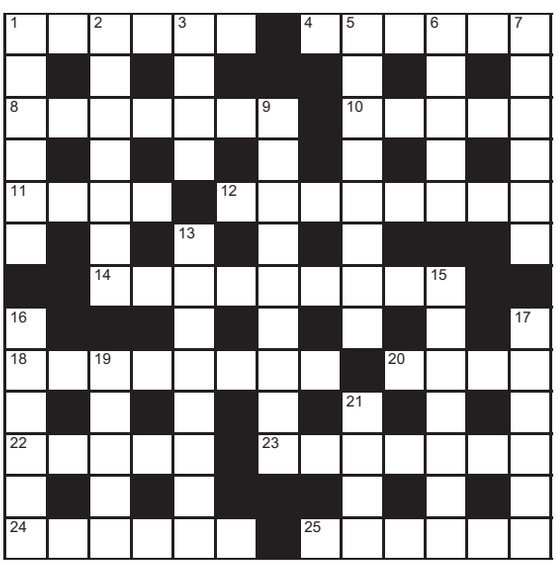
Sakuro
No 4836



Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

For interactive puzzles visit thetimes.com

The Times Quick Cryptic
No 3396 by Oink



Across
1 Say no to waste! (6)
4 Artist in tea shop pouring water from this? (6)
8 Lovingly look after American singer — and his pants (7)
10 Half of Athens regularly used to follow (5)
11 Husband dismissed from position in city abroad (4)
12 Spooner's protection officer arrived for poker? (4,4)
14 Doctor protects a bystander (9)
18 One questioning old flame, a gold-digger perhaps (8)
20 Like India, with a large land area (4)
22 Airline scam — no veggies can eat this (5)
23 Finished shed, I hear (7)
24 Casino employee who sells you drugs? (6)
25 Tide turning after His Majesty's approval (6)

Down
1 New lease restricting church (6)
2 Rips off warm clothing (7)
3 Wrong to seize power in revolution (4)
5 Amusing story one acted out (8)
6 Bewildered, as purser must often be (2,3)
7 Still supporting the Spanish team? (6)
9 Earnest father let off (9)
13 Rebelliousness of French chap due to be married (8)
15 Saved or otherwise secured (7)
16 Wife went out with feet like this? (6)
17 Prestige suffering in court (6)
19 Some maniac crashing in African capital (5)
21 Gosh it's cold in British roadster on vacation (4)

Yesterday's solution on page 15

Radio with a view

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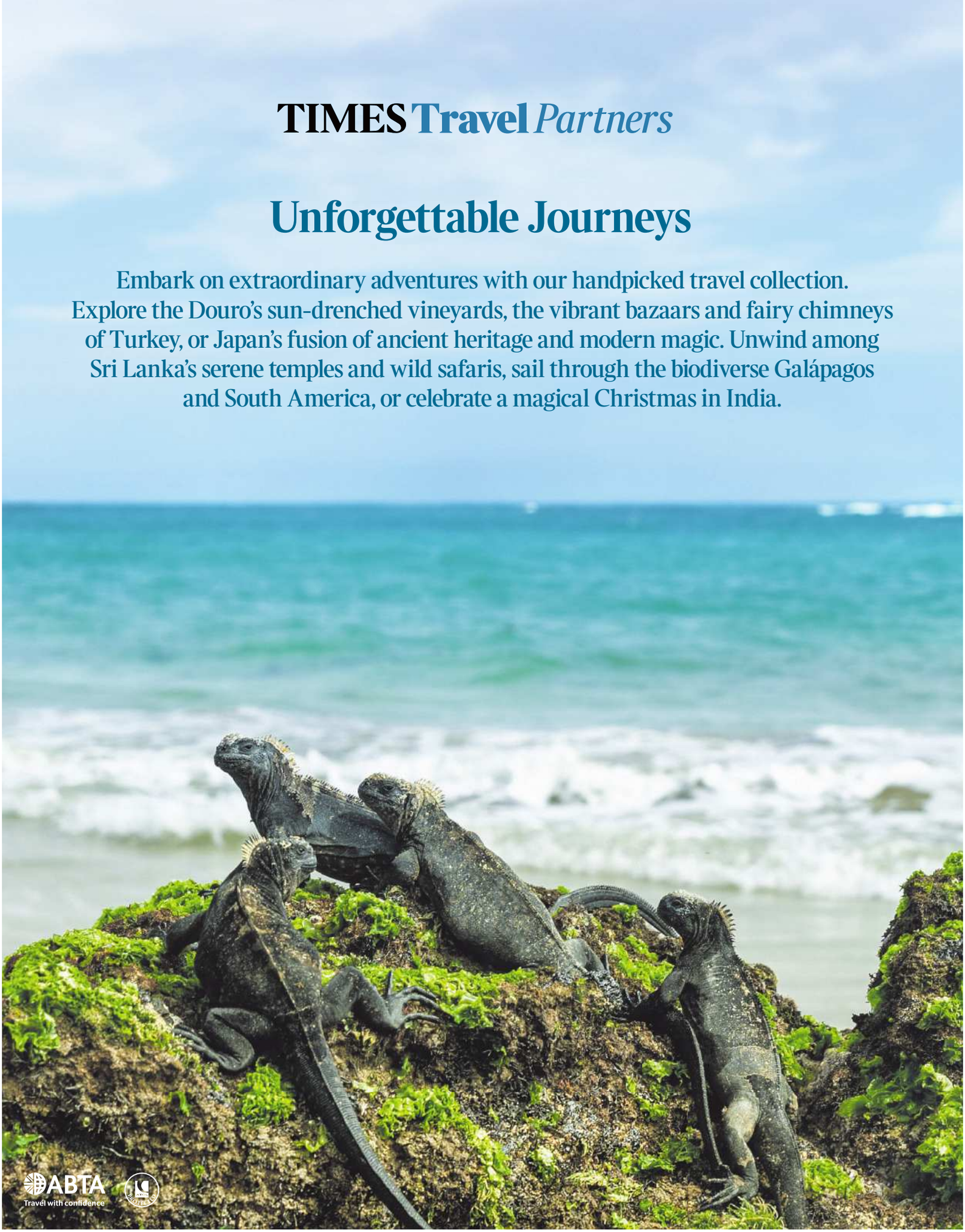
Unforgettable Journeys

Embark on extraordinary adventures with our handpicked travel collection. Explore the Douro's sun-drenched vineyards, the vibrant bazaars and fairy chimneys of Turkey, or Japan's fusion of ancient heritage and modern magic. Unwind among Sri Lanka's serene temples and wild safaris, sail through the biodiverse Galápagos and South America, or celebrate a magical Christmas in India.



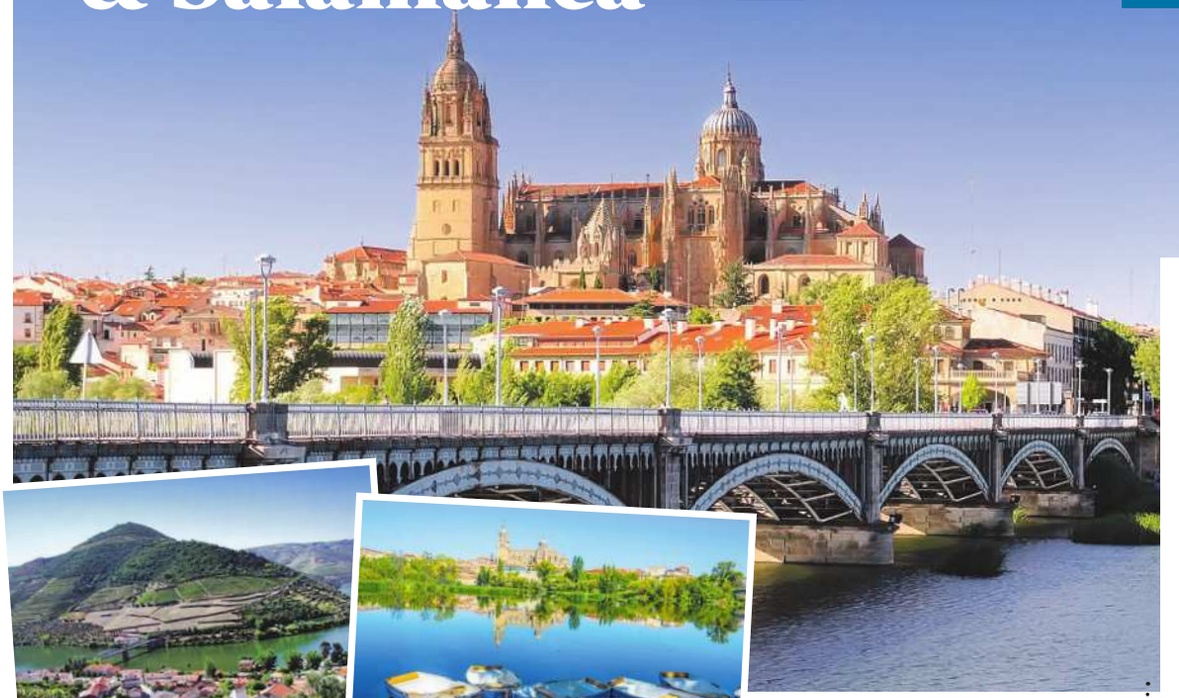
ABTA
Travel with confidence

European River Cruises

The Douro, Porto & Salamanca

RIVER

WITH RETURN FLIGHTS PLUS TRANSFERS



Explore what is possibly Europe's most undiscovered river through the stunning Douro Valley. The once-wild Douro river has been tamed by a system of dams and locks, producing an enchanting topography reminiscent of Scotland's lochs. Cruise through port wine territory, where lush hillsides have given way to a patterned landscape of terraced vineyards. Portuguese wine is simply outstanding, and our on-board wine list includes some excellent regional wines.

Departures November 2026 and March to November 2027

Day 1 - Arrival in Porto
Day 2 - Pinhão
Day 3 - Castelo Rodrigo
Day 4 - Option between Salamanca or Almeida
Day 5 - Option between Mateus Palace or Régua Douro Museum
Day 6 - Lamego
Day 7- Porto
Day 8 - Return Home†

EIGHT DAYS FROM

£1,799

PER PERSON

WITH SO MUCH INCLUDED:

- Return flights plus transfers
- Seven nights on board a five-star ship in your choice of spacious cabins with window or French balcony
- Delicious full board dining, plus Chef's Dinner
- Free drinks package*
- Expert Cruise Director looking after you throughout

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES:

- Four visits including Mateus Palace Gardens, Castelo Rodrigo, Lamego and a typical quinta with wine tasting
- Guided tour, lunch and flamenco show in historic Salamanca
- Dinner at Quinta da Pacheca with a selection of their wines
- Traditional Portuguese folk music show
- Guided tour of charming Porto and visit to a port wine cellar

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TIMES Travel Partner

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15 DAYS FROM
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per person

Pearls of the Philippines

April 2027 to November 2028

Discover the Philippines, an extraordinary archipelago where dramatic mountain landscapes, colonial history and tropical paradise come together. From the ancient rice terraces of Banaue to Bohol's iconic Chocolate Hills and the pristine beauty of Palawan, this journey reveals the country's rich heritage, diverse cultures and spectacular natural wonders.

Begin your adventure, in a group of just 18 fellow travellers, soaking up the local culture before exploring the historic walled city of Intramuros and the lively district of Las Piñas, home to traditional crafts and the unique Jeepney Museum.

Journey north into the spectacular Cordillera Mountains to admire the ancient, hand-carved rice terraces of Mayoyao and Hapao. Immerse yourself in indigenous Ifugao culture with local school visits and a traditional rice wine-making demonstration, then head to Sagada to view the mysterious Hanging Coffins.

Fly south to tropical Bohol to marvel at the iconic Chocolate Hills, cruise the scenic Loboc River, and visit a sanctuary for the tiny Philippine tarsier. After a hands-on cocoa farm experience, catch a ferry to Cebu to discover its rich colonial history. Finally, fly to Palawan to cruise the breathtaking Underground River, island-hop around idyllic Honda Bay, and enjoy a farewell rooftop dinner back in Manila before flying home to the UK.

Price includes

- Return international flights and current taxes
- Domestic transportation
- 12 nights in three- plus / four-star accommodation
- 12 breakfasts, 11 lunches and 12 dinners
- Touring with guides and entrance fees
- Exclusive free pre-tour extension including hotel night, breakfast and private transfers (available on any Wendy Wu tour)

What we love

Visit a local cocoa farm to learn about traditional chocolate production and take part in a hands-on chocolate-making experience.

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per person

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Immerse yourself in Japan's historical treasures and cultural wonders on this extensive tour that explores the country's most spectacular landscapes, including the iconic Mount Fuji and the Japanese Alps.

Starting in vibrant Osaka, you'll explore Japan's main island, Honshu, ending up amongst the bright lights and sky-scraping towers of capital Tokyo. En route, you'll see the very best of Japan: ancient history in Kyoto and Nara, the more recent past in Hiroshima, the beauty of the Japanese Alps where you'll see snow monkeys and explore rural towns, gaze on the perfect cone of Mount Fuji and more. Expect plenty of traditional Japanese experiences, from a tea ceremony to washi paper making and, depending on your departure date, a sumo wrestling tournament.

When booking this tour through The Times, you will get an exclusive complimentary pre-tour extension including an extra hotel night with breakfast - make sure to quote TIMES-ON when booking.

Price includes

- Return international flights and current taxes
- Domestic transportation, including bullet train to Kyoto
- 15 nights in three- and four-star accommodations
- 15 breakfasts, 14 lunches and 15 dinners
- Touring with guides and entrance fees
- Exclusive free pre-tour extension including hotel night, breakfast and private transfers (available on any Wendy Wu tour)

What we love

The all-encompassing itinerary with an exceptional range of authentic inclusions, from delicious local cuisine to immersive experiences.

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£2,775
per person

SAVE UP TO 15%*
BOOK BY SEP 30

Sri Lanka - Temples, Safari and Beach

October 2026 to November 2028

Sigiriya Fortress, Sri Lanka

A meticulously crafted merge of meandering around ancient sites, marvelling at the country's natural spectacles and moments of total enlightenment.

Immerse yourself in the atmospheric, temple-teeming cities of Colombo, Polonnaruwa and Kandy, pausing for steaming cups of Ceylon tea and reflecting on the past from atop ruins and fort ramparts. Sit amongst fragrant spice gardens to watch a cookery demonstration, join an expert botanist on a guided walk, and learn about the ins and outs of the country's gem industry.

Carefully curated experiences allow for interactions with local wildlife, encompassing a visit to an elephant rehabilitation centre and game drives into the the heart of Yala National Park. After all the adventuring, the tour slows to the pace of the swaying palm trees that fringe the shores of a beachside resort, set overlooking the Indian Ocean.

Galle Lighthouse, Sri Lanka

Leopard, Sri Lanka

Price includes

- Return flights to Colombo from a choice of UK airports
- Comfortable, air-conditioned coach travel and transfers throughout
- 11 nights' half-board accommodation in Colombo (one night), Habarana (two nights), Kandy (two nights), Nuwara Eliya (one night), Yala (two nights) and Beruwala (three nights), plus two nights on an airplane
- Discover the charms of Sri Lanka's largest city, Colombo
- Explore Yala National Park on a half-day game drive in search of wildlife
- Uncover the ancient sites and historic monuments of Polonnaruwa
- Fully escorted by a friendly, experienced tour manager
- Local taxes and applicable fees

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Peru, Ecuador & the Galápagos Islands Cruise

April 2027 to November 2028

Machu Picchu, Peru

Breathtaking world wonders, the treasures of the Incas and some of the planets most unusual creatures await on this unforgettable tour and cruise combination.

Unearth the lost cities of the Incas, soak up exquisite natural landscapes and follow the legendary voyage of Charles Darwin's HMS Beagle with an unforgettable 17-day tour and cruise holiday. Beginning your South American adventure with a visit to Peru's Sacred Valley, where the Inca civilisation once thrived, and the magnificent 'lost city' of Machu Picchu. You'll also explore Cusco, home to a unique blend of Inca architecture and colonial style, and Peru's cosmopolitan capital, Lima, before flying to lofty Quito, where you can explore the Ecuadorean capital in its spectacular Andean setting.

Next is an internal flight to Baltra where you'll be greeted by the friendly, experienced crew of MV Galápagos Legend, your home for the next four nights. As the ship charts an expertly crafted route, showcasing the very best of the remote Galápagos Islands, you'll have access to some of the lesser visited islands and panoramic views of the unique landscapes. With two fascinating shore excursions each day, explore the islands of Santa Cruz, Santiago, Isabela, Fernandina and Rabida, with an experienced naturalist as your guide and embrace encounters with the extraordinary creatures that make the islands their home.

Lima, Peru

Blue Footed Boobies, Galápagos Islands

Price includes

- Return flights to Cusco and from Quito plus four internal flights
- Comfortable, air-conditioned coach travel and transfers throughout
- Four nights' onboard the MV Galápagos Legend
- Ten nights' mixed-board accommodation, staying in the Sacred Valley (two nights), Aguas Calientes (one night), Cusco (two nights), Lima (two nights), and Quito (three nights), plus two nights onboard the aircraft
- Encounter sea lions, marine iguanas, blue-footed boobies, and giant tortoises at the Galápagos Islands
- Guided tours of Lima, Cusco, the Sacred Valley and Quito
- Fully escorted by a friendly, experienced tour manager
- Local taxes and applicable fees

Scan the QR code with your camera app to view more details.

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Save up to £400 per person on selected departures*

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Spirit of India at Christmas

December 17, 2026

Price includes

- Return flights from London, plus overseas transportation
- 11 nights in four- and five-star hotels, plus one night in flight
- 11 breakfasts, five lunches, 11 dinners including a welcome drink
- Visit Delhi, Jaipur, Ranthambore, Agra, Lucknow and Varanasi
- Sunrise visit to the Taj Mahal
- Game drives in Ranthambore
- Discover Abhaneri Stepwells
- Aarti ceremony
- Boat ride on River Ganges
- Just You Holiday Director as your host and Specialist Local Guide

Enjoy an incredible journey through India's very best cultural, religious and natural sites. Starting with the heady scents of Old Delhi's vibrant bazaars and food stalls, we'll move on to Jaipur and its mix of fortresses, palaces and busy street markets. In Ranthambore National Park we'll spend time looking out for the local wildlife, including the beautiful but elusive tiger. We then travel on to Agra, home of the Taj Mahal which we will visit, as well as spending time at Agra Fort - a truly impressive site to explore. There's also time in Lucknow, which is well known for its gardens and monuments and during our visit we'll enjoy an immersive experience at an eighth generation fragrance house. We'll also enjoy a cultural fix with visits to temples and the holy city of Varanasi, where we'll sail along the Ganges at dawn – a real wow moment on this tour.

Scan the QR code with your camera app to view more details.

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14 DAYS FROM
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per person

Turkish Treasures:
FROM ISTANBUL'S PALACES TO CAPPADOCIA'S WONDERS

September 2026 to October 2027

Price includes

- Return flights from London, Manchester and Birmingham, plus overseas transportation
- Six nights in four-star hotels
- Six breakfasts, three lunches and five dinners
- Tour of Istanbul including The Blue Mosque and Hagia Sofia
- Cappadocia and the Goreme Valley with a glass of wine at sunset
- Shop for local goods at the Grand Bazaar in Istanbul
- Experience the World Famous Turkish cuisine
- Coffee and Baklava-tasting
- Just You Holiday Director as your host and Specialist Local Guide

Discover the many sides of Turkey on an unforgettable journey from the vibrant streets of Istanbul to the extraordinary landscapes of Cappadocia. Explore Istanbul's fascinating history, including the magnificent Blue Mosque, Hagia Sophia and Topkapi Palace, and soak up the atmosphere of the colourful Grand Bazaar. Continue to ancient Ephesus, where impressive ruins bring the past to life, before visiting the dazzling white terraces of Pamukkale. Your adventure ends in Cappadocia, home to surreal rock formations, cave dwellings and underground cities. For a truly magical experience, there's also the chance to take an optional hot-air balloon flight over this spectacular landscape. With ancient wonders, fascinating culture and breathtaking scenery, this is a wonderful introduction to Turkey.

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TIMES Travel *Partner*

Serene coastal hideaway

NEAR SICILY WITH TOURS

October 2026, April to October 2027

Escape to Sicily's sun-drenched eastern coast for a week of sea views, characterful towns and spectacular scenery. Based in the relaxed seaside resort of Letojanni, you'll be perfectly placed to combine leisurely days by the Mediterranean with time exploring some of the island's most celebrated sights, from glamorous Taormina to the dramatic landscapes of Mount Etna.

Just north of Taormina, Letojanni has a laid-back charm, with its beach and waterfront promenade lined with cafés and restaurants. Stay at the four-star Albatros Beach Hotel, a stylish base close to the sea, with Taormina, Mount Etna and historic Syracuse all within easy reach. It's an ideal setting for discovering Sicily's rich history, volcanic landscapes and beautiful coastline — with plenty of time to simply slow down and enjoy the view.

Price includes

- Return flights from various UK airports
- Seven nights at the four-star Albatros Beach Hotel in Sicily
- Daily breakfast
- Guided full-day tour of Mount Etna and Alcantara Gorges
- Syracuse Boat tour of the island of Ortigia and sea caves
- Taormina Boat Tour with Aperitif on Isola Bella

Other dates available

October 2026 from **£659pp** • April and May 2027 from **£629pp** • June 2027 from **£849pp** • July and August 2027 from **£929pp** • September 2027 from **£819pp** • October 2027 from **£719pp**

SEVEN NIGHTS FROM

£629*

per person

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Luxury Madeira Retreat

WITH MEALS AND TOURS

November 2026 to April 2027

Discover the charm of Madeira with a relaxing escape to the island's beautiful capital, Funchal. Surrounded by lush gardens, scenic hills and Atlantic Ocean views, this getaway offers the perfect blend of tranquillity and exploration. Wander cobbled streets, savour delicious local cuisine and soak up the island's year-round sunshine for an unforgettable holiday experience.

This refined escape pairs elegant five-star comfort with curated island moments, from panoramic coastal views to guided walks through Madeira's famous levadas. Days unfold at a gentle pace, blending heritage charm, scenic landscapes and relaxed dining, all set within one of Funchal's most distinguished hillside retreats.

Price includes

- Return flights from selected UK airports
- Seven nights at the five-star Quinta da Bela Vista in a Garden View Room
- Daily breakfast and dinner
- Choice of two and a half-day tours or Levada walks, with transfers

Other dates available

November and December 2026 from **£769pp** • January 2027 from **£799pp** • February 2027 from **£849pp** • March 2027 from **£869pp** • April 2027 from **£919pp**

SEVEN NIGHTS FROM

£769*

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Discover Greece

WITH AN UNFORGETTABLE GULET CRUISE

May to October 2027

Set sail on a seven-night adventure through the Ionian, exploring idyllic Greek islands and hidden stretches of coastline from the comfort of a traditional gulet. Days unfold at an easy pace, with stops to swim and snorkel in crystal-clear waters, discover secluded bays and step ashore in picturesque harbour towns.

On board, stay in a comfortable Standard Plus Cabin with air conditioning and an en-suite bathroom, while the spacious open deck is made for relaxing as the scenery drifts by. Evenings are equally laid-back, beginning with a welcome dinner and culminating in a special Captain's Dinner on the final night — a fitting end to a week of island-hopping in the Greek sunshine.

Price includes

- Return flights from various UK airports
- Seven-night Ionian Islands gulet cruise in a Standard Plus Cabin
- Private beach and swim stops
- Use of snorkelling equipment
- Buffet breakfasts and plated lunches
- Welcome Dinner and Captain's Dinner on the final night
- Return private transfers from airport to port

Other dates available

May 2027 from **£899pp** • June, September and October 2027 from **£929pp** • July 2027 from **£1,049pp** • August 2027 from **£1,069pp**

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£899*

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